# Historiography, History Writing and Identity – A Critical and Comparative Analysis of Five Korean Protestant Historians and Their Histories

DONG SUNG KIM

A THESIS PRESENTED TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 2008

# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been presented to any other academic institution other than the University of Edinburgh, to which it is submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself, and is a result of my own research.

DONG SUNG KIM

MAY 2008

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have supported my family over the past five years as I sought to complete my doctoral studies. Although it is impossible to list all of them here it is important for me to mention several who have especially made this journey in academic formation a challenging, yet enjoyable.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the my home church, the Presbyterian Church of Korea for allowing me this period of study leave. I also wish to thank the Myunsung Presbyterian Church and Rev. Kim, Sam-hwan for sponsoring our family during our period of study in Edinburgh. Thanks are also due to my good friends, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Williams and Nneoma Chima in the Council for World Mission, for administering the scholarship grant in a professional and pastoral manner. I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Ken Ross and Eunice Hessell in the World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland for their support in providing housing for our family.

I could not have even contemplated pursuing a doctorate at Edinburgh University had it not been for the encouragement and support of my good brother and dear colleague in the Ecumenical Movement, Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum. I owe him an overwhelming sense of gratitude which cannot be adequately expressed in words. I must also thank the late Professor David Kerr with whom I had the pleasure and honour of initiating my research. The tools with which he equipped me during the first two years have enabled me to come to this stage, and for this I am deeply grateful. Dr. Elizabeth Koepping has been a tremendous source of strength, academically and personally, during the final stages of my research and she has been a mentor as well as my academic supervisor. Thanks are also due to two good friends in New College, Susan Chapel and Rebecca Aechtner, who read through the thesis and provided much needed corrections.

I must also record my thanks to the friends of Ross Chapel, the Korean Christian Fellowship in Edinburgh, who have supported our family spiritually and emotionally over the years. Thanks are also due to our parents, Rev. Kim, Seung-wook and Mrs. Suh, Si-jun, and Deacons Kim, Young-gu and Choi, Yoon-sook, who have continued to pray and support us throughout these long years. Last, but not least, to my wife, Ka-hee and our girls, Ye-in and Ye-won, thank you.

# ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to engage, in a critical and comparative manner, the perspectives and methods utilised in studying the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians. Within the history of Christian mission Korea has been regarded as having exemplified many positive characteristics. Some have gone so far as to claim that Korea was a miracle of 20th century Christian mission.

This thesis attempts to analyse the manner in which such presumptions and characterisations have influenced the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The main argument of the thesis is that the perspectives and methods utilised by the Korean Protestant historians in their study of Protestant Christian history in Korea simply serve to expound and expand upon such presumptions. In this respect, despite the purported application of different perspectives in their historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea the actual written histories of the Korean Protestant historians remain identical in nearly all aspects.

The thesis comprises seven chapters which can be categorised into three major parts. The first part of the thesis includes the first three chapters. These chapters provide the theoretical basis upon which the critical and comparative analysis of the five Korean Protestant historians is conducted. It will be arguably demonstrated that the Korean Protestant historians systematically fail to obtain a coherent understanding of the very context in which their historical studies are undertaken. It will further be shown that this failure leads the historians to uncritically appropriate the various historical presumptions regarding Protestant Christianity into their historiographical perspective. We will further demonstrate how this further leads to the actual written histories adopting identical forms, as well as contents.

The second part of the thesis will present three concrete examples of how the uncritical appropriation of presumptions distorts the reality of the historical experience. It will be shown that the failure by the historians to question such presumptions result in the habitual replication of distorted narratives and mistaken interpretation of historical experiences. It will further be shown how certain presumptions, which are themselves the product of prejudiced historical interpretation, function as a master narrative which undermines the appropriate application of the purported historiographical perspectives of the Korean Protestant historians.

The final part of the thesis will seek to identify theoretical and methodological alternatives that can inform the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Developments in methodology and perspective with regard to the historical study of Christianity as a world religion can provide useful insights into how Korean Protestant historical studies can move beyond its present state of entrapment. Incorporating methods and perspectives that allow a dialogical interaction with the universal historical experience of Christianity can also enlarge the narrative of Korean Protestant history.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Historiography, History Writing and Identity – A Critical and Comparative Analysis of Five Korean Protestant Historians and Their Histories**

## Introduction

The historical experience of Christianity in Korea has often been referred to as a miracle of 20th century missions. The relative ease with which Protestant missionary institutions were founded and the exponential growth of the Korean Christian church were heralded as a story of successful implantation and naturalisation of the Christian faith. Numerous histories were written by both Western and Korean historians in an attempt to describe and analyse the historical experiences of Christianity in Korea. Each, in their own way, sought to chronicle the growth and development of Christianity in Korea.

This study conducts a review of how the historical study of Christianity in Korea has developed. More specifically, it conducts a comparative and critical analysis of how the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea have been studied by Korean Protestant historians. Though many Korean Protestants have written histories on Christianity in Korea, there has not been a study which investigated how such histories were written, from what perspective, with which methodologies, and with what results. This study is the first to engage these issues, not by presenting a historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea, but rather by discerning the influences that have informed the practice of Korean Protestant historical studies.

The contents of this study are limited to the work by Korean Protestant historians. This is because the number of histories published by both Korean and non-Korean authors is too large to make a comparative and critical analysis feasible within the constraints of a doctoral thesis. Additionally, the primary purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between historiography, as the perspectives and methodologies employed in studying history, the actual writing of history and the shaping of identity. In this regard, it was deemed prudent to limit the study to the histories of one particular tradition, Protestant. Another important reason for limiting the study to the histories by Korean Protestant historians is because it is the tradition to which I belong, and with which I am most familiar.

The primary goal of this study is to ascertain and critique the manner in which a particular identity, in this case a specific self-understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity, influences the shaping of historiography which, in turn, affects the writing of Korean Protestant Christian history. It is my contention that at present the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians uncritically replicates the fallacy of the vicious circle. A narrowly delineated Korean Protestant Christian identity informs and shapes the Korean Protestant historian's perception of Korean Protestant Christianity which then informs the specific historiographical perspective and methodology that the historian utilises in investigating the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This culminates in a virtually identical writing of history which describes and interprets these historical experiences to strengthen and legitimise the particular Korean Protestant Christian identity that influenced the historian in the first place. This entrenched approach has produced a historical narrative that simply draws on a very narrow tradition of the Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea. This 'traditionalised' historical narrative is then utilised to formulate a particular self-understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity, which is legitimated by its depictions and interpretations of its historical experience contained in the histories by Korean Protestant historians.

In order to illustrate the manner in which this continuous and uncritical replication of cyclical logic influences and limits the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea this study comparatively and critically engages five histories by Korean Protestant historians. They are, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* by L. George Paik; *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church) by Min, Gyeong-bae; *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* (A History of Korean Church) co-authored by members of the Institute of Korean Church History Studies; *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church) by Park, Yong-gyu; and *Hangug Gyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Church) by Kim, Young-jae.

The *History of Protestant Missions in Korea* was first published in 1929 and was originally Paik's doctoral thesis submitted to Yale University. It was long regarded as the most important single book written in the field of Korean church history and missions. It is still much respected as the first original historical study to be produced by a Korean Protestant historian, and continues to be used as a basic

textbook in classes for the history of missions in Korea as well as Korean Church History. The book has been reprinted several times since 1929, the most recent being in 1987. *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* also originated as a doctoral thesis which was submitted by Min, Gyeong-bae to Doshisha University (同志社大学 *Dōshisha daigaku*), Kyoto, Japan. It was first published in Korea in 1972 with a revised edition coming out in 1982 and a new revised edition printed in 1993. *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* originated as a three volume project initiated by the Institute of Korean Church History Studies. It was the first attempt at a collaborative historical study of Christianity in Korea and the first volume was published in 1989 and covered the periods from the 16th century to 1918. The second volume, which covered the periods from 1919 to 1945, was published in 1990. Unfortunately, the final third volume, which was supposed to cover the period from 1945 onwards never materialised. Park, Yong-gyu's *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* also comprises two volumes. However, unlike the history by the Institute both were published in 2004 indicating that the entire history was written and published as a single project. *Hangug Gyowhesa*, by Kim, Young-jae, is an enlarged and expanded version of his doctoral thesis submitted to the Philips Universität in Marburg in 1981. The Korean edition was first published in 1992 and a new revised edition in 2004.

Although these are not the only histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians they have been selected for the purpose of this study for the following reasons. First, they allow this critical and comparative study to investigate how the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians developed over time. By comparatively and critically analysing the five histories we can ascertain what changes, if any, occurred in terms of developments in historiography, discovery and utilisation of source materials, hermeneutical paradigms, and methods of writing history. More importantly, for the purpose of this study, the chronological spread of the five histories allows us to show and then critique how the cyclical logic has continuously influenced the Korean Protestant historians in their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea irrespective of when the historians conducted their studies and wrote their histories. This reveals that the influence of the cyclical logic is prevalent across all generations of Korean Protestant historians.

Secondly, the five histories illustrate how the cyclical logic affects not only those who were trained in Korea but also those educated in non-Korean institutions. Of the

five historians L. George Paik and Park, Yong-gyu received postgraduate level training in the United States. Min, Gyeong-bae undertook training in Japan and Kim, Young-jae in Germany. In contrast, the historians of the Institute, who took part in the collaborative historical project, are graduates of Korean institutions. The pervasive influence of the cyclical logic and the continuous repetitive nature of the histories is *not* the result of the Korean Protestant historians being trained from one particular school of thought. Rather, as we shall further illustrate, it is reflective of a more ominous complacency on the part of the Korean Protestant historians and a failure to conduct or present authentic studies of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Third, the five histories selected for comparative and critical analysis in this study are presently utilised as textbooks in Christian colleges and Seminaries in Korea. This means that they are directly involved in the shaping of the historical understanding of contemporary Korean Protestant Christians, particularly theologians and clergy. Their degree of influence is thus quite extensive within the Protestant Christian establishment in Korea. As such, they continue to inform and influence the shaping of a historically legitimated identity of Korean Protestant Christianity, an identity which we argue is historically misconstrued.

This study presents a critical and comparative analysis of the five histories in six chapters. Chapter 1 presents a brief overview of the general academic context in which the practice of historical studies in Korea developed, as well as its relationship with the development of Korean Protestant historical studies. The purpose of placing the review of how Korean Protestant historical studies concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea developed within the wider context of the academic discipline of Korean historical studies is to demonstrate that Korean Protestant historical studies is one part of the historical developments that occurred within Korean historical studies. This realisation allows us to investigate the variety of theoretical issues that has informed the development of Korean Protestant historical studies concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea. It further helps us to identify how each Korean Protestant historian was, inevitably, a child of his/her period, influenced by the various tugs and pulls of competing theories, ideologies, and power interests.

Chapter 2 presents a critical and comparative analysis of the various arguments put forth by the Korean Protestant historians as a means of legitimising their purportedly different historiographical perspectives and methodologies. It first

investigates the various claims made by the Korean Protestant historians that their particular study presents a significantly different and unique contribution to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea, and then critiques their arguments from various theoretical and methodological perspectives. It also identifies certain commonalities in the particular methods and perspectives employed by the Korean Protestant historians that persist in spite of the purportedly different historiographical approaches advocated by each. This allows for an elucidation of the manner in which a misinformed historiography leads to a distorted writing of history that eventually culminates in the replicated legitimations of a 'traditionalised' historical narrative serving to perpetuate and further solidify a particular self-understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea as its identity.

Having mapped out how the cyclical logic influences the Korean Protestant historians, irrespective of their arguments for different historiographical perspectives and methods of investigation, Chapter 3 builds upon the findings of the previous chapter and further captures the manner in which the dominance of the "traditional" historical narrative is reflected in the actual writing of history by Korean Protestant historians. Once again, each of the five histories is critically and comparatively analysed with regards to its structure, content of the narratives, and the bibliographical sources utilised by the historian in conducting his study of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This analysis enables us to further identify common characteristics within each of the histories that reflect the pervading influence of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative, thereby illustrating how this dominant narrative obfuscates the purportedly different historiographical positions of the five Korean Protestant historians which inevitably results in a habitual repetition of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative.

The three chapters which follow present a more detailed look at how the 'traditionalised' historical narrative impacts upon the actual writing of history by critically and comparatively analysing three central topics as they are presented within the histories by Korean Protestant historians. Each chapter critically and comparatively analyses the manner in which the purportedly different perspectives and methodologies employed by Korean Protestant historians, in accordance with their specific historiography, is applied to the historical study of a particular historical experience. This demonstrates how the relationship between historiography, history writing and the resultant historical self-understanding that the

reader receives through it actually functions in a cycle of mutual influence. It also illustrates how this cycle of mutual influence affects the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea in such a way that the end results replicate a 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Chapter 4 analyses how the Korean Protestant historians treat the role of the vernacular Bible within the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It first identifies the recurring commonalities within the contents of the five histories and then critically engages them in terms of how the Korean Protestant historians limit the scope of their historical inquiry and, consequently, misrepresent the overall historical experiences of Korean Protestant Christians regarding the Bible. The critical and comparative analysis of the five histories clearly demonstrates that the Korean Protestant historians' study of the particular historical experience replicates a habitual repetition of the 'traditionalised' narrative as a means of solidifying the existing interpretation of it. It further reveals how the historical narratives presented by the five Korean Protestant historians, purportedly utilising different historiographies, culminate in a romanticised description and interpretation of the Korean Protestant historical experience ultimately resulting in a replication of hagiography rather than a presentation of history.

Continuing the comparative and critical analysis of the Korean Protestant historians' histories, Chapter 5 investigates how they describe and interpret the historical experiences of revivals and revivalism. Once again we see how the Korean Protestant historians resort to uncritically replicating the established 'traditionalised' historical narrative which promotes a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-understanding. It reveals that, despite the argument for each Korean Protestant historian advancing a different historiography with unique perspectives and methods of historical study, the histories ultimately fail to reflect this purported uniqueness or difference in their contents. Furthermore, our research clearly demonstrates that the description and interpretation of the historical experiences of revivals and revivalism by the Korean Protestant historians simply contributes to re-emphasising a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity and providing historical legitimation for its historicity, yet even in this they fall short of expected standards. As a result the so-called different depictions of the historical experience of revivals and revivalism in Korean Protestant Christianity are corrupted into a hagiographic portrayal of

Protestant Christianity in Korea that conforms to the established 'traditionalised' meta-narrative.

The hagiographic nature of historical studies conducted by the Korean Protestant historians is further elucidated in Chapter 6 where we conduct a comparative and critical analysis of the relationship between Church and Nation. This chapter focuses particularly on the prevalent practice of the Korean Protestant historians to unanimously utilise a nationalistic perspective in their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The comparative and critical analysis of the five histories shows how the attempts by the Korean Protestant historians to portray Protestant Christianity as a "national religion" is based on faulty presuppositions and mistaken interpretations of the historical context in which Protestant Christianity took root in Korea. It further reveals that an effort to combine a racial and ethno-centric narrative of the Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea under the rubric of nationalism exists in all five of the histories by Korean Protestant historians. It identifies the goal of this 'nationalisation' of the Korean Protestant historical experience as an effort to gain historical legitimacy through an appeal to nationalistic sentiments while overlooking the interactions between the diverse forms of internal and external forces that shaped Protestant Christianity in Korea.

The final chapter, Chapter 7, seeks to identify a way forward which can challenge and deconstruct the prevalence of this cyclical logic in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians. This chapter presents postmodern and postcolonial historiographies as alternative paradigms that can help break the cyclical logic presently encapsulating the relationship between identity, historiography and history writing. It presents a brief overview of the general context in which each theory developed, and this is followed by specific examples of how a postmodern and postcolonial historiography can help the Korean Protestant historian deconstruct the dominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea, thereby allowing for the formation of an alternative paradigm of historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

The present study has utilised the method of comparative and critical analysis for assessing and critiquing the manner in which the Korean Protestant historians have developed their arguments for their individual historiographies, the methods employed in the writing of their histories and the particular identities reflecting a specific self-understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity. In addition, this study

is an empirical study of five histories written by Korean Protestant historians and is, therefore, qualitative in nature. Consequently, the five histories by Korean Protestant historians listed above comprise the primary sources for this study. Of these, four were written in the Korean language and one in English. Secondary sources comprised primarily of texts dealing with the wider Korean social, political, cultural and religious contexts written in both Korean and English.

A final note should be made with regards to the Romanisation of Korean words and names. This study has utilised the relatively new system of Romanisation adopted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea. The basic outline and principles, as well as a summary and examples, are available on the Ministry's webpage found at <<http://www.mct.go.kr/english/roman/roman.jsp>>

# Chapter 1 - Historiographical Developments in Korean Historical Studies and Their Relation with Protestant Christian Historiography

## Introduction

Recent developments in the social sciences now compel us to assume that any given text is the result of the diverse influences and interactions with its context. As such, in order to properly interpret the text the reader is encouraged to take into consideration the wider contextual environs, not only of the reader but also of the writer of the text in question.

Taking this assumption as a basis the present chapter attempts to provide a description of the context in which Korean Protestant Christian historiography, as a method by which its historical experiences were studied, described and interpreted, has developed. It will also attempt to place the study itself in its own context. However, we must also point out at this juncture that the narrative contained in this particular chapter is only one of many possible descriptions. In spite of such seeming limitations, this exposé is presented with the goal of providing a backdrop against which the study concerning historiography, history writing and its relation to identity is conducted on Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Although there are numerous studies on the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea none have attempted to situate themselves within the wider context of historical studies. This is not to say that the Korean Protestant historians conduct their historical studies in blatant disregard for the genealogy of histories on Protestant Christianity in Korea. All attempt to present a general overview of previous histories on Christianity in Korea, thereby offering a degree of legitimacy and justification for their particular study and proving their work as being substantially different.

However, this review of previous histories does not examine the wider influences of academic discipline that informed and influenced the particular historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea being reviewed by the historian. As such, they are

conducted in a manner which presents a perception of historical studies on Protestant Christianity existing separately from those on general Korean history. In many ways, the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea retain a close proximity to the historical experiences of the Korean people. Nonetheless, they simultaneously contrive to segregate the description and interpretation of the Protestant Christian experience of identical historical events from their 'secular' counterparts by presenting a narrative that projects a mythical aura of uniqueness and greater value by virtue of it having been experienced by the Protestant Christian community or an individual representative of it. Such narratives serve to formulate and strengthen a perception of oneself as being different from and better than the 'other' Koreans who are not members of the Protestant Christian community.

In order for us to better illustrate how this relationship of historiography, history writing and identity functions to replicate and reinforce a particular self-understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea we will first attempt to place the practice of Korean Protestant Christian historical studies within the context of the wider general historical studies of Korea. By looking at how historical studies in Korea developed we will attempt to identify various influences that have informed the methodologies and perspectives employed by the Korean Protestant historians. We will then describe how the five historians who are the subjects of this study interpret the development of Korean Protestant Christian historiography and place their respective studies within it. This chapter closes by showing the manner in which the historical study of Korean Protestant Christianity, as it has been conducted by Korean Protestant historians, is, inevitably, a child of the context in which Korean historical studies developed.

## 1. A Brief Overview of Developments in Korean Historiography

### 1) Introduction of Modern Methods of Historical Study – The Contention Between Imperial and Nationalist Historiography

Modern methods of studying history were first introduced to Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Korea began to open her doors to exchanges with other countries and enlarged her sphere of experience. Unfortunately, the opening of Korea to outside influences after its long years of seclusion did not occur under auspicious circumstances. Korea's entry to the modern world during the late 19th century placed a dual burden of "newly formulating a modern society and nation state which would replace the feudal social systems of the past" on the one hand and "preserving the integrity and independence of the Korean nation from the aggressive encroachments of Japanese imperialism" on the other.[1] These historical burdens were further exacerbated by the encroachment of a Japanese imperial historiography[2] "which took advantage of the colonial aggression" and "enforced a distorted perception of Korea's history and the contemporary context."[3] Due to the specific epochal conditions and historical reality of colonisation modern Korean historiography developed along the twin axes of "an ideology of modern transformation and anti-imperial nationalism."[4] Therefore, we need to understand the various efforts by Korean historians to instil in their compatriots a critical sense

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[1] Hangug Yeogsa Yeonguhwe (Society of Korean Historical Studies), ed., *Hangugsa Gangui* (Lectures on Korean History) (Seoul: Hanul Academy, 1990, 2nd edition), pp. 22-3.

[2] This particular historiography could also be labelled 'colonial historiography.' However, in choosing to label the particular historiography employed by the Japanese in the legitimisation of their colonial enterprise in Korea I have deliberately chosen to use the term 'imperial historiography.' This is based on the distinction presented by Edward Said who defines "imperialism" as "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory." In contrast, "colonialism" is defined as being "almost always a consequence of imperialism" and is the actual "implanting of settlements on distant territory." In this sense, the colonisation of Korea, i.e. the actual physical occupation of land and resources, can be regarded as having begun in earnest only after 1905, when Japan declared Korea as her Protectorate. However, the process of imperialism, i.e. the presentation of a theoretical foundation and motivation for adjusting the attitudinal orientation toward the invasion and occupation of Korea, developed within Japan even as early as the 1860s. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p.8.

[3] Kang, Man-gil, et al., *Hangugsa* (History of Korea) 23 *Theories and Methodologies in the Study of Korean History* 1 (Seoul: Hangil Publishing Co., Ltd., 1994), p.93.

[4] Hangug Yeogsa Yeonguhwe, ed., *Hangugsa Gangui*, p.23.

of historical consciousness in light of the Korean experience of imperialism at the hands of the Japanese.

The Japanese sought to legitimise their colonial aggression against Korea and actively utilised history as a medium for justifying their imperial ambitions and colonial activities. The historical arguments put forth by the Japanese eventually solidified into an imperial historiography, "aggressively propagated and enlarged" by the Governor-General and utilised as "a tool for assimilating the Korean people to the Japanese Empire."[5] Imperial historiography was one of the earliest of modern historiographies utilised for the study of Korean history. However, this earliest form of modern historical study on Korean experiences had the underlying motive of "legitimising the aggressive encroachment of Korea by Japanese imperial aspirations and supporting its various policies."[6] As such, it led to a history of the Korean people which portrayed them as, historically, being unable to transform their society without assistance and support from a superior external influence.

According to the logic of imperial historiography, such external influences had primarily come from China during the pre-modern period. However, the sea change in national fortunes after Japan's successful modernisation led to Japan, which regarded itself as the first modern Asian country, stepping forward as the dominant power and exerting its influence on the modernisation of its neighbour, Korea.

Faced with this challenge of near historical annihilation Korean historians during the early 20th century actively sought to appropriate modern methodologies in order to develop historical narratives to challenge, contradict and correct the severely distorted accounts presented by the proponents of imperial historiography. It was within this context that the development of a modern Korean historiography incorporated a strong nationalistic character. The formation of a nationalistic historiography was considered a primary weapon with which to counter the influences of an imperial historiography.

The two goals of this nationalistic historiography during its initial period of formulation were, on the one hand, to incorporate "modern methods of studying history, thereby equipping itself as a modern historiography" while simultaneously

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[5] Kang, Man-gil, et al., *Hangugsa* 23, p.121.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.130.

seeking "to contradict the Japanese imperial historiography used to legitimise their colonial enterprise by denying the indigenous historical progress and development of Korea."[7]

This nationalistic perspective and method of historical study continuously evolved and developed within the particular historical context of Korea's historical experience. In many ways it came to dominate the theoretical practice of historical studies in Korea and continued to function as an effective master narrative throughout the periods in which Korean historiography subsequently developed. However, as we shall see below, this does not mean that a single dominant nationalistic historiography exerted an unrivalled influence.

## 2) Subsequent Development of Other Influential Historiographies - Historical Materialism, Historical Positivism and *Minjung* Historiography

In spite of the dominant position of nationalist historiography, other theories developed during consecutive periods of Korea's historical experience and affected subsequent generations of historians who were developing their own perspectives and methods for studying the history of Korea. Most notable of these are historical materialism, historical positivism and *minjung* historiography.

***Historical materialism***, "sought to prove that the historical development of Korea progressed abreast of the historical development of other nations in the world."[8] It was a historiography which had the ultimate goal of "strongly contesting the 'Theory of Stagnation'[9] advanced by the proponents of imperial historiography"

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[7] *Ibid.*, p.131.

[8] *Ibid.*, p.150.

[9] The 'Theory of Stagnation' was a component of imperial historiography which argued that Korean society lacked a historical experience of progress and development. It primarily focused on the socio-economic aspect of Korean society. According to its proponents Korea's socio-economic structure had remained stagnant despite the changes in political structures and the rule of subsequent dynasties. Therefore, in the view of the Japanese historians who developed the imperial historiography, Korea was unable to modernise herself because she did not possess the socio-economic structure of a feudal society which they regarded as necessary for fostering a progressive transition to a modern social, economic state. The Japanese historians argued that Korea's socio-economic structure lacked the crucial sociological and economical elements necessary for an autogenous modernity. Therefore, it was necessary for a modern state, such as Japan, to assist Korea's entry into modernity by 'jump

and thus proving that evidence for historical progress is inherently present in the history of Korea.[10] Historical materialism sought to critically overcome what it regarded as the limitations of both imperial historiography and "the idealistic historiographies of nationalist historians."[11]

One of the distinctive characteristics advanced by the historical materialists is the central issue of periodisation.[12] According to the historical materialists, "social progress does not result from subjective human will or motivation but objective relations that occur irrespective of such elements."[13] The greatest contribution of the historical materialists is that they "clarified the falsehood of the 'Theory of Stagnation,' which had been a central element of imperial historiography and placed the history of Korea within the stream of global historical progress, thereby opposing, to a certain extent, the imperial historiography of Japan."[14] However, this contribution of historical materialism is hampered by the fact that their historical studies "lack the sufficient application of a positivist approach to historical materials that could adequately illuminate the division of periods from the primal communal society to the modern capitalist one."[15] In addition, the internalisation of the perspectives and methods associated with historical materialism was not sufficient to present a historical study which fully appropriated its perspectives and methods in the investigation of historical events.

The Korean historians who advocated and developed the theoretical tenets of historical materialism were undoubtedly influenced by the emergent social ideology of their times, Communism. As such, theirs was an attempt to appropriate the Marxian methodology for presenting a materialist conception of history. This is

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starting' the socio-economic process and forcibly restructuring her political, social, and economic structures. However, this 'Theory of Stagnation' was the result of analyses that were based upon a simplistic comparison of Japanese and Korean socio-political and socio-economic structures from the Japanese perspective. Therefore, the concepts of modernity and feudalism, which in themselves did not exist in Japan until well into the 19th century, were being utilised by historians employed by the colonial government to present a theory which would provide historical evidence to legitimise the colonial aggression and encroachment of Korea's sovereignty.

[10] Kang, Man-gil, et al., *Hangugsa* (History of Korea) 23, p.150.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.152.

[12] *Ibid.*, p.155.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.*, p.162.

[15] *Ibid.*

reflected in the fact that they attempted to present a history of Korea according to a periodisation that sought to describe the progressive development of Korea's socio-economic structures according to the mode of production. This was also an attempt to appropriate a conception of historical development following upon the Western models of modern history, a criterion that the Korean historians regarded as crucial in refuting the Theory of Stagnation employed by the Japanese imperialist historiography to justify their domination and exploitation of Korea.

However, it would appear that their appropriation of historical materialism was limited in that it could only function as a limited rebuttal against Japanese imperial historiography. For although the historical materialists may have been successful in structuring their historical narratives of Korea in a way which coincided with the so-called development model of Western modern nation states they were inadequate for substantively arguing against the encroachment of Japanese imperialism. At most, all that the historical materialists were able to achieve is simply to "tenaciously realign the history of Korea so that it conformed to their particular historiography."[16] Such a realigned historical narrative was inadequate for opposing the multifaceted imperialist historiography of the Japanese.

***Historical positivism*** advocated the goal of "applying a scientific and positivist methodology to the study of Korean history."[17] However, the historical positivists primarily developed their historiography under the influence of the government sponsored academia of Japanese historians. Therefore, most of the methodologies that they appropriated were those employed by the Japanese. This, consequently, resulted in the positivists maintaining a close working relationship with the Japanese scholars, thereby underwriting the colonising enterprise of historical studies on Korea.

It was not until the 1930s that the Korean historical positivists began to actively attempt to disassociate themselves from Japanese influence. In 1934 several Korean historians came together to form the *Jindan Haghoe* (震檀學會 , Jindan Academy). These historical positivists prided themselves on the fact that "historical studies, as a modern academic discipline, began with their works."[18] The reason they regarded

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[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*, p.164.

their academic efforts as being the origin of a modern historiography was that they perceived their historical studies as overcoming the previous efforts of the enlightenment historians [19] who presented a history which was "exceedingly exaggerated to conform to the nationalistic perspective of interpretation." [20] According to the historical positivists the important thing in historical studies was "the process of confirming the specific facts of an event."[21] As such, they regarded "the interpretation of history according to an established particular theory" as being illogical.[22]

However, this attitude of the historical positivists was not without its critics. Many chastised them for being too idealistic in their attitude toward historical studies, an attitude which resulted in "the pursuit of a 'pure' form of historical analysis which ultimately lacks any coherent perspective or frame of analysis."[23] Another criticism was that their pursuit of "a strictly academic approach to historical studies that relied on documentary criticism became, in the end, an uncritical appropriation of the Japanese academia employed by the government to promote their imperial historiography."[24] As such, "it failed to adequately address, in a critical manner, the perspectives and methodologies of imperial historiography."[25] This, it is argued, "led to the development of a historiography which did not actually progress beyond the established academic boundaries of previous historiographies, i.e. imperial historiography, and remained primarily within its logic and methodology."[26]

Both historical materialism and positivism were historiographies which developed during the Japanese colonial period when the imperial historiography was still operative as the norm for historical studies of Korea. As such, and in

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[19] The "enlightenment historians" are so called because their histories sought to function as texts that would enlighten the Korean masses and raise a historical consciousness as a Korean nation. The enlightenment historians primarily wrote biographies of heroic individuals portraying them as role models that the people should emulate. They also translated works which introduced the liberation movements of countries in other parts of the world. Representative of this group were individuals such as Shin, Chae-ho, Jang, Ji-yeon and Park, Eun-shik.

[20] *Ibid.*, p.163.

[21] *Ibid.*, p.164.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*, p.165.

[24] *Ibid.*, p.168.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*, pp.168-9.

conjunction with the dominant master narrative of nationalist historiography, each sought to counter the influences of the imperial historiography in their own way. However, each also sought to address the problematic issues that arose as a result of the nationalist motif dominating the thought and practice of Korean historians. These rather piecemeal efforts led to the diversity of historiographies for studying the history of Korea. However, in spite of the many contributions that these historiographies had they were still unable to defuse the dominance of nationalist perspectives that gradually subsumed other perspectives into its grand narrative.

Unfortunately, the end of the colonial occupation of Korea in 1945 did nothing to alter or drastically shake the predominance of the nationalist historiography in Korean historical studies. As Edward Said observed, "imperialism ... lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices."[27] In the Korean context of historical studies, the lingering residual effects of imperialism were compounded by the brutal intrusion of an ideological chasm that ultimately resulted in the Korean War. It was not until the 1960s that the field of history studies in Korea recovered sufficiently to begin a new era of historical investigation, albeit one affected by the North-South divide.

The 1960s were a time of political turmoil. Nearly a decade of dictatorial rule by Synghman Rhee finally capitulated before a mass civil movement initiated by students angry at corruption and the illegal manipulation of the voting process. The April 19th Revolution in 1960 appeared to usher in a different era where the power of the people would lead to the establishment of a democratic society. However, this euphoria was short lived as the military coup d'etat by Park, Jeong-hee on May 16 1961 established another authoritarian dictator. The military junta that ruled South Korea after the coup sought to dispel the dissatisfaction and antipathy of the populace by utilising history. As part of their efforts to legitimise their power grab, the dictatorial government appealed to the historical emotions of nationalism. Consequently, the 1960s saw a new interest in nationalist historiography which extended well into the 1970s.[28]

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[27] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p.8.

[28] Hangug Yeogsa Yeonguhwe, *Hangugsa Gangui*, p.38.

The historiography which developed during the 1960s and 70s "stringently criticised the positivist approach to history as adhering to the imperial historiography of the Japanese colonial authorities." At the same time it was critical of the limitations of "a Marxist historiography based on historical materialism."[29] However, the new emphasis on nationalist historiography was not without its dangers. In many instances, "historians unreasonably identified nationalist historiography with a simplified critique of imperial historiography."[30] In other words, "any historical method or perspective that purported to contradict the imperial historiography of the colonial period was automatically assumed as being nationalistic."[31] As a result, "any historian who claimed his/her historical analysis argued for a critical re-evaluation of the perspective or methodology advanced by imperial historiography was regarded as ipso facto a nationalist historian."[32]

This simplistic appropriation of nationalist historiography signally failed to sufficiently critique the ideas, concepts, and methodologies of imperial historiography. As a result, it failed to "present any concrete concepts and methods of historical investigation which could serve to develop a nationalist historiography that would not only critique imperial historiography but provide a sufficient alternative."[33] Additionally, the critique of imperial historiography was "limited to simply criticising the perspectives and methods of the imperial historiography employed by the Japanese. The critique of Korean historians failed to recognise the residual influences of imperial historiography in their contemporary contexts."[34] Neither did they fully comprehend the fact that "diverse streams existed within what was conveniently labelled nationalist historiography."[35]

The 1980s witnessed a prominent development in the historiographies of Korean historical studies, the emergence of a ***minjung historiography***. *Minjung* historiography can be defined as "the tendency to engage in practical scholarly activity with the goal of pursuing the prospect of reform for establishing a society

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[29] *Ibid.*, pp.178-9.

[30] *Ibid.*, p.179.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*; Hangug Yeogsa Yeonguhwe, *Hangugsa Gangui*, p.39.

where the *minjung* are its subjects."[36] The basis of this historiography is "the disjunctive proposition that the *minjung* are the subjects of historical progress" and it views history "as the process in which democratic self-reliance expands."[37]

An important element in the development of this particular historiography is how the central term, *minjung*, is defined. Within the academic community advocating *minjung* historiography there have been two traditional ways of defining *minjung*: as a trans-historical entity, and as a context-specific historical entity. The trans-historical definition of *minjung* regards them as "the subordinated masses in general."[38] This view argues that "the specific type of *minjung* in a given situation differs in accordance to the historical conditions of a society."[39] As such, according to this definition, *minjung* "is a generic term for all those in history who live without recourse to wealth, power, reknown or special privileges."[40] When specifically analysed, "the political *minjung* are the subordinated classes, the economic *minjung* are the proletariat and the social *minjung* are those who belong to the lowest strata of society."[41] However, despite this generalised concept of *minjung*, "the trans-historical view fails to adequately provide a historical platform for properly assessing the historical perspectives of *minjung* historiography which developed within the specific context of Korean society during the 1980s."[42]

The contrasting definition of *minjung* attempts to trace their emergence in relation to a specific historical, social and economic context. According to this view, the first traces of *minjung* in Korean history can be found "during the crisis of the late 19$^{th}$ century when Korea was being incorporated into the global capitalist system."[43] This view of *minjung* allows the concept to be expanded to encompass other localities that shared similar historical experiences. Therefore, *minjung* can be said to have emerged "as a general historical entity in countries which lacked a capitalist structure and experienced the crisis of imperialism and colonial

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[36] *Ibid.*, p.197.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*, p.198.

[43] *Ibid.*

aggression."[44] This perspective regards the *minjung* as having been formed "as the subjects whose responsibility was to resolve the issues of human liberation, the liberation of subjugated classes and the colonised nation."[45] Therefore, the internal structure of the *minjung* is comprised of an "alliance of classes" while externally it reflects "nationalistic characteristics." [46] However, this definition of *minjung* "emphasises the conflict between opposing nations while neglecting the class conflicts within a given nation group."[47]

The development of *minjung* historiography in Korea tended to prefer the second definition. This was because the majority of historians regarded *minjung* as having developed into a specific historical entity during the particular historical experiences of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, they tended to favour the historical interpretation which relegated the role of national liberator and motivator for social transformation to the *minjung*. For the above reasons *minjung* historiography "sought to establish the *minjung* as the subjects who resolved the structural contradictions of Korean society on the basis of the historian's analyses of the contemporary social structure which utilised the theory of scientific transformation."[48]

The *minjung* historiography that developed in Korea during the 1970s and 80s primarily concentrated its historical studies on "succeeding the positive aspects of the anti-imperial historiographies in their perceptions and understanding of history."[49] This led to the *minjung* historians "adhering to a common perception of history where the *minjung* were identified with the subjects of transformation in specific historical experiences."[50] As a result, a large majority of historical studies conducted during the 1980s "attempted to present a scientific explanation which presented the historical inevitability of the emergence of *minjung* as the motivators and subjects of the movement for national liberation during Japanese colonial occupation by

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[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*, pp.198-9.

[49] *Ibid.*, p.199.

[50] *Ibid.*

investigating the characteristics and contradictory conditions of a colonised society."[51]

However, the greatest limit that *minjung* historiography has is that there has not been a sufficient effort to clearly define and present its methodology. *Minjung* historiography "has yet to sufficiently establish a coherent theoretical perspective and methodology."[52] The historians still need to "identify how they will dialectically resolve the conflicting interests between nations and classes in order to adequately interpret the modern and contemporary history of Korea."[53] Additionally, they need to address the fact that, at present, *minjung* historiography "primarily presents the long historical experience of pre-modern Korea as simply being the pre-historical context in which the *minjung*, as an historical entity, was conceived."[54] A further limitation of the *minjung* historiography is that it failed to adequately appropriate the wider historical context in which such perspectives developed, such as the growth of subaltern studies in India, which also sought to address the histories of struggle between the powerful and powerless, in developing its perspectives and methods for historical study.

As we can see from the above brief overview, it is important to constantly bear in mind the particular historical context in which certain historiographies developed in Korean historical studies. This is because an awareness of the context allows us to properly understand the process by which modern historiography developed in Korea. Additionally, an awareness of the context in which each of the historiographies were conceptualised as a theory and applied as a methodology in studying the history of Korea is important for adequately assessing its effectiveness and functionality as a historiography.

The predominant and most influential context in the development of modern historiography in Korea was the colonial experience and the legacies of imperialism that permeated the historical experiences of the Korean people throughout the late 19th century up to the mid 20th century. Another parallel context was the formulation and emergence of a nationalistic consciousness which solidified into an all

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[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*, p.200.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*

encompassing meta-narrative of nationalism. For the historians in South Korea this nationalistic consciousness was further complicated by an overbearing anti-communist ideology promoted by the state. As a result, the South Korean historians came to develop a nationalistic narrative that closely identified patriotic nationalism with anti-communism, thereby estranging the historical experiences of North Korea and those historically associated with it.

As the above investigation of the different streams of Korean historiography clearly shows, nationalism functioned as the primary criterion for deciding the theoretical validity and efficacy of a particular historiography. Although different ideological and theoretical perspectives continued to influence the development of modern and contemporary historiography each of these was subsumed under the dominant narrative of nationalism. Therefore, in many respects modern and contemporary historiography in Korea inherited the ethno-centric attitudes of pre-modern historiographies. The strong ethno-centric nationalism that developed as a result of the colonial experience at the hands of the Japanese resulted in the development of a prejudiced attitude towards and methodologies of historical studies in Korea. In many respects, the legacy of the colonial experience and its imperial historiography, and the efforts by Koreans to challenge, contradict and correct its pervasive encroachment, so distorted the development of modern historiography in Korea that a nationalist historiography came to dominate as the sole legitimate and effective method and perspective for historical studies.

## 2. A Brief History of the Development of Korean Protestant Christian Historiography

With the above overview of the context and development of Korean historiography in mind let us now turn our attention to the development of Korean Protestant Christian historiography as it is reflected in the five histories analysed in this study. E.H. Carr noted that "the study of history is a study of causes. The historian ... continuously asks the question 'Why?'"[55] A similar question can be

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[55] E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin Books, 1987, 2nd edition), p.87.

advanced as one embarks upon a historical study of the development of Korean Protestant Christian historiography. Why? Why does the historian advocate a particular historiography over and against another? What makes the particular historiography that the historian is advocating and utilising for his study of Protestant Christianity in Korea different from the others, and why does he argue that it is so?

Such questions are not easily answered. An attempt to engage in a comprehensive analysis of all histories written on Protestant Christianity in Korea would be one way of arriving at a decisive answer. However, given that there are hundreds of such historical studies by both Korean and non-Korean authors, this would be a monumental task too large for one individual to conduct with sufficient integrity. The sheer breadth of Protestant Christianity in Korea is itself an obstacle which is difficult to surmount. Denominationalism is a well recognised characteristic of Protestant Christianity in Korea with over one hundred and seventy different Protestant organisations in Korea today.[56] As such, it is difficult to define what would constitute 'the' authentic Protestant Christian history that would encompass the entire breadth of this denominational diversity.

Of course, Protestantism did not arrive with this plethora of denominations. However, even from the outset the missionary enterprise of Protestant Christianity in Korea exhibited strong denominational tendencies. Although the Presbyterian and Methodist traditions were the first to establish an institutional presence in Korea during the late 19th century, they were represented by no fewer than four different denominational agencies for the Presbyterians and two for the Methodists. Other denominational agencies from different Christian traditions soon followed and from the early 20th century onwards Korea had at least ten different denominations actively engaged in missionary endeavours throughout Korea. Therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible as well as impractical, to refer to the historical experiences of one particular denomination as representing 'the' history of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

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[56] This number is taken from statistics released in September 2005 detailing the religious adherence of Koreans as measured in 2002 according to religious organisations and compared with that of the National Census of 1995. The details were compiled by the Religious Affairs Office of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Korea. Details were viewed on the Ministry's website located at <<http://www.mct.go.kr/open_content/administrative/administrative/statistics_view.jsp>> on 7 May, 2007 at 21:30.

Despite the seeming impossibility of presenting a representative history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, there have been consistent efforts put forth by various individuals to present histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Due to the nature of Protestant Christianity being a foreign religion which was introduced to Korea by missionaries from outside, many of the earliest attempts to present a historical study of Protestant Christian experience in Korea stemmed from the pen of the missionaries who were directly involved in its propagation. In most cases they were the result of efforts to preserve the details of missionary activities as well as presenting the author's particular perspectives and interpretations of certain events. As such, Protestant Christian historiography first originated from non-Korean sources. It was only much later that a Korean Protestant Christian historiography emerged as Koreans began to engage in a systematic study of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

We will present a more detailed account of the manner in which the Korean Protestant historians justify the development of their particular historiographies in the next chapter. At this juncture we will simply analyse the manner in which they evaluate preceding histories. This will serve to present the extent to which the review of previous studies fails to take account of the multiplicity of traditions and external influences on the development of historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea.

None of the five historians attempts to analyse the contextual environment in which the previous studies were conducted. They simply satisfy themselves with registering the titles and their authors. Two distinct methods stand out in the way the Korean Protestant historians conduct their review of previous studies. The first is a categorical approach which attempts to place previous histories in particular thematic categories chosen by the historian. The second is a chronological approach in which the historian attempts to present a review of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea according to a prescribed set of periods. There is no set or preferred method of inquiry for reviewing previous historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea that is employed identically or universally by the Korean Protestant historian. Of the five histories analysed in this thesis, all but one present a substantial review of previous historical studies: three conduct their review chronologically and one thematically.

The notable exception to the above is *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1823-1910* by L. George Paik. Unlike any of the other Korean Protestant historians Paik does not conduct a review of previous historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This may be due to the fact that his is generally recognised as the first historical monograph written by a Korean on the subject. It may also be due to the fact that when he first conducted his historical study there were few histories dealing with Protestant Christianity in Korea and practically none by Koreans. In any case, Paik's history is the only one of the five presently under analysis in this thesis that does not contain a detailed review of previous histories by Korean Protestant historians.

### 1) Chronological Reviews of Previous Studies

A rather elaborate chronological review of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea can be found in *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church) by Park, Yong-gyu. An interesting characteristic of Park's review is that the histories by non-Koreans are more prominent in the earlier periods and less so in the latter. For example, in surveying the publications that he regards as presenting insights into a history of Protestant Christianity in Korea published before 1920 Park's review lists an extensive number of publications by non-Koreans while failing to list even one item containing a Korean contribution. However, we must point out that his failure to include histories by Koreans is not because there were none existent at the time. Kim, Young-jae clearly states that a publication which included the contribution of Korean Protestant Christians existed as early as 1918.[57]

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[57] This particular history was *The Collection of Histories of the Presbyterian Church in Korea* that was edited by a committee of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and published in 1918. Of course, one could argue that this *Collection* was the result of collaborative efforts by missionaries and Koreans. However, whether it is classified as having been the work of Koreans or non-Koreans this does not detract from the fact that historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea, albeit limited to one particular denomination, which incorporated Korean attempts to describe and interpret the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea and their contributions, did exist before 1920.

Nevertheless, Park's review is primarily focused on publications explicitly authored by non-Koreans. Interestingly, he includes many travelogues within his review of publications. For example, he lists Hendrick Hamel's *An Account of the Shipwreck of a Dutch Vessel on the Coast of the Isle of Quelpart, Together with the Description of the Kingdom of Corea* (1668), Basil Hall's *Account of a Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea, and the Great Loo-Choo Island* (1818), John McLeod's *Voyage of His Majesty's Ship Alceste, Along the Coast of Corea to the Island of Lewchew: With an Account of her Subsequent Shipwreck* (1818), Karl Gutzlaff's *Journal of the Three Voyages Along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832 and 1833 with Notice of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands* (1834), William Elliot Griffis' *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (1882), John Ross's *Corea, Its History, Manners and Customs* (1879), Percival Lowell's *Chosun: The Land of the Morning Calm* (1885), George W. Gilmore's *Korea from its Capital: With a Chapter on Missions* (1892), and Isabella Bishop's *Korea and Her Neighbours* (1897). He regards these as contributing to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea because "they describe how and when Korea began to come into contact with western religions and how they reacted to such encounters. As such, these publications provide us with information so that we can better appreciate the history of the Korean Church."[58]

Additional publications that Park regards as providing insight into the earliest experiences of the interaction between Koreans and Protestant Christianity are *Korean Sketches* by James S. Gale, *The Passing of Korea* and *History of Korea* by Homer H. Hulbert, and *Fifteen Years Among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea* by Lillias H. Underwood.[59] Also included are the publications that missionaries published regularly to share their experiences among themselves and with a wider readership beyond Korea. Prime examples listed are the *Korean Repository*, the *Korea Review*, *Korea Field*, *Korea Methodist* and *Korea Mission Field*.[60]

Park continues his review of the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by non-Koreans during the period after 1920 by listing publications that were written by missionaries reflecting upon their experiences in Korea. Examples include Horace H.

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[58] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church) 1 (1784-1910) (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 2004), p.16.

[59] *Ibid.*, pp.15-9.

[60] *Ibid.*, p.19.

Underwood's *Modern Education in Korea* (1926), Charles Allen Clark's *Korean Church and Nevius Methods* (1928), James E. Fisher's *Democracy and Mission Education in Korea* (1928), Stanley S. Saltau's *Korea: The Hermit Nation and Its Response to Christianity* (1932), Alfred W. Wasson's *Church Growth in Korea* (1934), and Harry A. Rhodes' *History of the Korean Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., 1884-1934* (1934).[61]

In addition to the various missionary reflections, the 1920s was also a period when Korean depictions and interpretations of historical events began to appear in the form of historical monographs. The various studies conducted during the 1920s and 30s by Koreans that are listed by Park are Lee, Myeong-jik's *Joseon Yasogyo Dongyang Seongyowhe Seonggyeolgyowhe Yagsa* (A Brief History of the Holiness Church of Joseon) (1929), *Joseon Yesugyo Jangrowhesagi* (A Historical Chronicle of the Joseon Presbyterian Church) (1928) by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Lee, Neung-hwa's *Joseon Kidoggyo-geup Wegyosa* (History of Christianity and Foreign Relations in Korea) (1928), Cha, Pil-geun's *Joseon Gidoggyo Baldalsa* (A History of the Growth and Development of Christianity in Joseon) (1934), and Jang, Jeong-shim's *Joseon Gidoggyo 50-nyeon Sahwa* (History of Fifty Years of Protestant Christianity in Joseon) (1934).

It is interesting to note, however, that in listing the publications written by Koreans, Park presents an evaluation of these works, yet does not evaluate missionary writing. His critique of the historical studies published during the 1920s and 30s by the Koreans is that they "lack a scientific method of historical studies"[62] and the only positive element that can be found in them is that they "attempt to illuminate the history of the Korean Protestant Church by reflecting the experiences of the Koreans."[63] Interestingly, he does not present any particular criteria by which he has decided that the efforts at historical studies by Koreans are viewed as lacking in scientific methodologies while the various travelogues and personal reflections of missionaries presumably possess no such deficiencies. The vagueness of his comments and his unwillingness to elaborate on why he regards the histories by non-Koreans as more authentically historical than those by Koreans leads one to question

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[61] *Ibid.*, pp.20-1.

[62] *Ibid.*, p.21.

[63] *Ibid.*

whether he is simply regarding the western perspectives as being more scientific and therefore more trustworthy than those of the Koreans.

Another characteristic of Park's review of previous historical studies is that, rather unexpectedly, his chronological review abruptly ends with the simplistic listing of histories published during the 1920s and 30s noted above. Instead of conducting any further reviews of historical studies published during the ensuing periods, Park suddenly embarks upon a long and detailed analysis of the historical studies by L. George Paik, Min, Gyeong-bae, Lee, Man-yeol and his group of scholars who formed the Institute of Korean Church History Studies and Kim, Young-jae. The reason for such an abrupt abandoning of the chronological review of previous historical studies is not clear. It may have been due to the fact that he did not regard a more thorough review of preceding works as necessary in order to present the merits of his particular historiography in contrast to those of his predecessors. It could also be that he simply regards his historical study as addressing the shortcomings of the four histories of Paik, Min, Lee and Kim. Whatever the reason, Park's review of previous studies is anything but thorough.

Another chronological review of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea is that contained in *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church) by Min, Gyeong-bae. The single unique characteristic which sets his review of previous historical studies apart from those of others is that it reflects his particular ethno-centric nationalistic perspective. As such, it is only concerned with the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea that were written by Koreans. However, he seems to concur with Park, Yong-gyu that the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean historians began in earnest only during the 1920s. As such, the first period that he reviews is from the 1920s to 1945.

Interestingly, the first historical study of Protestant Christianity that he refers to, the *Joseon Kidoggyo-geup Wegyosa* (History of Christianity and Foreign Relations in Korea) of 1928 was written by a Buddhist scholar, Lee, Neung-hwa. As the title suggests, this was primarily a study on the socio-political context in which Christianity was introduced to Korea. Other historical studies by Korean Protestant historians during this period that are listed by Min include *Joseon Gidoggyo Baldalsa* (A History of the Growth and Development of Christianity in Joseon) (1938) by Chae, Pil-geun, *Joseon Yasogyowhesa* (A History of the Protestant

Christian Church in Joseon) (1940) by Jeong, In-gwa, *Joseon Gidoggyo 50-nyeon Sahwa* (History of Fifty Years of Protestant Christianity in Joseon) (1934) by Jang, Jeong-shim, and *Joseon Yasogyo Dongyang Seongyowhe Seonggyeolgyowhe Yagsa* (A Brief History of the Holiness Church of Joseon) (1929) by Lee, Myeong-jik.[64] Despite these publications being titled 'histories' and containing narratives of historical events within their contents, Min finds it "difficult to regard these as histories reflecting actual historical research."[65] Unfortunately, like Park, Yong-gyu, he does not present a set of criteria by which he evaluates a particular study as historical research or not.

Histories which were published after 1945 listed by Min include Kim, Yang-seon's *Hangug Gidoggyo Haebang Sipnyeonsa* (A History of the Korean Church a Decade After Liberation) (1958), *Daehan Gidoggyo Chimryegyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Baptist Church) (1964) by Kim, Yong-he, *Hangug Jerimgyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Adventist Church) (1965) by Lee, Young-rin, *Seonggyeolgyowhesa* (A History of the Holiness Church) (1970) by Lee, Cheon-young, *Hangug Gusegunsa* (A History of the Korean Salvation Army) (1975) by Jang, Hyeong-il, *Hangug Gamrigyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Methodist Church) (1975) by Lee, Seong-sam, and *Hangug Jangrogyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Presbyterian Church) (1970) by Jang, Hi-geun.[66]

The list clearly shows that there was a substantial growth of denominational histories after the 1960s. This would seem to reflect a degree of confidence held by denominations which had arrived in Korea much later than the Methodists or Presbyterians. It could be interpreted as showing that they felt that a sufficient amount of time had elapsed since their arrival to conduct a historical survey of their experience. It could also be interpreted as indicating a desire by the different denominations to present a version of their historical experience of colonial persecution and suffering through a denominational history. In this instance the denominational history would function not just as a historical legitimation of actions taken by the denomination but also detail the persecution they endured and the various forms of resistance. Such depictions would be important in formulating an

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[64] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church) (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1982, Revised Edition), p.10.

[65] *Ibid.*, p.10.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp.10-11.

identity of the particular denomination as being properly nationalistic. As we shall see in later chapters, this appeal to nationalistic qualities is an important and crucial element in the self-understanding of Protestant Christianity, regardless of denominational differences.

In the final part of his review of preceding studies Min notes that from the late 1970s onward there has been an increased interest in regional histories and micro-histories. For example, Kim, Su-jin and Han, In-su collaboratively published *Hangug Gidoggyosa Honam-pyeon* (A History of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Jeolla Region) in 1979 and this was followed by *Hangug Youngnamgyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Church in Kyongsang Province) in 1987. The *Hangug Youngnamgyowhesa* was originally commissioned by a committee comprising influential leaders from the Kyongsang Province and ultimately written by Jeon, Seong-cheon. Min sees the emergence of such regional histories as attempts to overcome "the disproportionate prevalence in the historical study of Korean Protestant Christianity to focus on the northern regions of Korea and the activities of the Northern Presbyterian mission."[67]

Additional micro-histories which appeared during the 1990s include works like *Hangug Gurisdoindeul-ui Gejong Iyagi* (A Narrative of the Conversion Experiences of Korean Protestant Christians) (1990) by Lee, Deok-ju which presents anecdotal stories of personal experiences that led to their conversion. Another example is the *Hangug Gamrigyo Yeoseongyowhe-ui Yeogsa* (A History of the Korean Methodist Women's League) (1990) by the same author that details, as the title suggests, the historical development of the Methodist Women's League. Seo, Jeong-min published *Gyowhe-wa Minjog-eul Saranghan Saramdeul* (Stories of Love for Church and Nation) in 1990 which presented an investigation of individual experiences of Protestant Christianity during the Japanese colonial period.[68]

A final chronological review of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea can be found in *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* (A History of the Korean Church) edited by members of the Institute of Korean Church History Studies (hereafter referred to as the Institute). The particular characteristic of the Institute's review is that they separate the period of development of Korean

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[67] *Ibid.*, p.13.

[68] *Ibid.*, p.15.

Protestant history into two large epochs. The first epoch is regarded as having started from L. George Paik and his *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910.* Additional histories included in this first epoch are *Joseon Gidoggyo 50-nyeon Sahwa* (History of Fifty Years of Protestant Christianity in Joseon) (1934) by Jang, Jeong-shim, *Joseon Gidoggyo Baldalsa* (A History of the Growth and Development of Christianity in Joseon) (1938) by Chae, Pil-geun, *Hangug Gidoggyo Hebang Sipnyeonsa* (A History of the Korean Church a Decade After Liberation) (1958) and *Hangug Gidoggyo Yeogsa Yeongu* (A Study of the History of Christianity in Korea) (1971) by Kim, Yang-seon and *Hangug Gidoggyowhe Chogisa* (A History of the Early Korean Church) (1970) by Lee, Ho-un.[69]

The greatest characteristic that the histories of the first epoch had, according to the Institute, is that, aside from the history by Paik, they sought to present "the testimony and witnesses of the Korean Church."[70] The Institute regards these histories as having "appropriated the perspective of mission history as the wider hermeneutical framework" while developing a "positivist and analytical method of writing history."[71] Additionally, in terms of source materials, the Korean historians "utilised the English language materials of missionaries" at the outset, but gradually "endeavoured to uncover and organise Korean resources for historical studies."[72]

The second epoch of Korean Protestant historiography, as identified by the Institute, begins from the 1970s and continues up to the point when their own historical study is conducted. The Institute regards Min, Gyeong-bae as being the primary historian during this second epoch. Min's attempt to describe and interpret the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea from a distinctly Korean perspective is regarded as a positive contribution of this period to the development of Korean Protestant Christian historical studies.

Another crucial historiography which the Institute regards as having first come to light during this period is the historical perspective of *minjung* theology. The Institute states that Ju, Jae-yong was the first to advocate a *minjung* theological

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[69] Institute of Korean Church History Studies, ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* (A History of the Korean Church) 1 (Seoul: The Christian Literature Press, 1989), pp.4-5. Hereafter, the acronym IKCHS will be used in the footnotes to refer to the Institute.

[70] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[71] *Ibid.*, p.5.

[72] *Ibid.*

approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. However, in spite of advocating a new historiography which would incorporate the *minjung* perspective, the Institute points out that Ju failed to produce a monograph that would exemplify what a *minjung* historiography would look like when practically applied to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Therefore, "it is difficult to adequately assess what is actually implied when one speaks of a *minjung* historiography."[73]

The Institute completes its review of this period by noting that the single most important contribution of the historians during the second epoch is that they "sought to establish a credible historiography by applying new hermeneutical methods to existing materials that had been amassed by the historians of the first epoch."[74]

**2) Thematic Review of Previous Historical Studies**

A thematic review of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea can be found in *Hangug Gyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Church) by Kim, Young-jae. He categorises the previous historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea as belonging to three distinct categories: "a history of the church following the pattern of a simple narrative of historical experience," "a history of the church from a Missions perspective," and "church history written from the perspective of Christianity's contextualisation and indigenous theology."[75]

According to Kim, publications which share the "pattern of a simple narrative of historical experience" include the many publications that missionaries wrote as a result of their residence and involvement in the life of the Korean people. He regards them as providing information on "the establishment of the Korean Church and its growth, as well as Korea's geography, history, and culture."[76] These publications are

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[73] *Ibid.*, p.7.

[74] *Ibid.*, p.8.

[75] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Church) (Seoul: Ireseoweon, 2004), pp.13-23.

[76] *Ibid.*, p.13.

*The Korean Repository*, *The Korea Review*, and *The Korean Mission Field.* Also included in this category is the *History of the Korean Mission, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., 1884~1934* (1934) edited by Harry A. Rhodes. This was a collection of articles written by colleagues of the Korean Mission, Presbyterian Church U.S.A. in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary. Similar histories include theses written by missionaries which describe their experience in Korea, such as the *History of the Methodist Mission in Korea, 1885-1930* (1947) written by Charles Davies Stoke and *A History of the Korean Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S. from 1892 to 1962* (1962) by George Thompson Brown. The most recent history that he reviews is *A History of the Church in Korea* written by Allen D. Clark and published in 1971. Kim evaluates these various publications as sharing the common characteristic of "simply presenting a historical narrative of mission activities and church growth."[77]

Histories by Koreans which fall into this category are the two denominational histories by the Methodist and Presbyterian churches *Daehan Gamrigyowhesa* (History of the Korean Methodist Church) (1975) and *Joseon Yesugyo Jangrowhesagi* (An Historical Chronicle of the Joseon Presbyterian Church) (1928), respectively. It is interesting to note that the majority of the histories by Korean historians which Kim, Young-jae lists in this category are those that were written after 1945. Examples include Kim, Yang-seon's *Hangug Gidoggyo Hebang Sipnyeonsa* (A History of the Korean Church a Decade After Liberation), *Hangug Gidoggyosa Yeongu* (A Study of the History of the Korean Church) by Kim, Gwang-su which contains a historical survey of Protestant Christianity in Korea from 1884 to the March First Independence Movement of 1919, *Hangug Gidoggyowhe Chogisa* (A History of the Early Korean Church) (1970) by Lee, Ho-un which looks at the history of Protestantism in Korea from 1832 to 1905, and the two volume *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* (A Study of the Christianity in Korea) by the Institute of Korean Church Historical Studies.

Histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by non-Koreans which Kim describes as belonging to the category of "a history of the church from a Missions perspective" are *The Korean Church and the Nevius Methods* (1930) by Charles A. Clark, *Church Growth in Korea* (1934) by Alfred W. Wasson, and *Wild Fire:*

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[77] *Ibid.*, p.15.

*Church Growth in Korea* (1966) by Roy E. Shearer.[78] Again, these histories tend to focus primarily on the aspect of church growth, and the reason that they are classified as histories from a theological perspective by Kim seems to be because their contents include an attempt to present a theological basis and explanation for church growth rather than because of their contributions to developing a historiography incorporating a particular theology.

The third category that Kim, Young-jae utilises to review previous historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea is that of "church history written from the perspective of Christianity's contextualisation and indigenous theology." He regards these histories as having been published during the 1960s, a time he regards as "a period when the subjectivity of the Korean church and a pursuit for a Korean theology through the contextualisation of Christianity" became most prominent.[79]

Examples of historical studies which he regards as belonging to this category include *Korea and Christianity: The Problem of Identification with Tradition* by Spencer J. Palmer.[80] A primary historical study conducted by a Korean which falls into this category, according to Kim's view, is the *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* by Min, Gyeong-bae. Kim regards Min's history as "a history of the church that gratifies the aspirations of contextual theology."[81] Exactly why he regards this particular history as affirming a contextual theology or what he regards as being a contextual theology is unclear. It would appear from the comments which he presents that the fact that Min's historiography was an attempt to present a perspective different from those of the missionaries is, itself, sufficient to brand it as being "contextual."

However, the strongest criticism of a contextual approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is directed toward *Minjung* Theology. While Kim argues that there has not been a historical monograph that has been published exclusively from a *minjung* theological perspective he feels that it is necessary to "critique how the *minjung* theologians view a history of the church."[82] According to

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[78] *Ibid.*, p.16.

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] Kim, Young-jae presents an incorrect version of the title, *Korean Christianity* in his text. In order to help the reader understand the specific work that he is referring to I have taken the liberty of correcting this mistake in the thesis and presenting this mistake in a footnote.

[81] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.18.

[82] *Ibid.*, p.20.

his understanding, the *minjung* perspective of church history is one in which "the activities of the missionaries are mistakenly viewed as being identical with colonialism and the history of the Christian church in Korea is regarded as being discontinuous with the historical tradition of the universal Christian Church."[83] Therefore, the *minjung* theological perspective of history is one that is "dissociated from the traditions of theology and ecclesiology."[84] As such, it is "to be repudiated."[85]

The manner in which the Korean Protestant historians review previous studies portrays several commonalities. The first is that none present a clear definition of what they regard as an acceptable historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. As such, their review of previous studies tends to gravitate toward an ad hoc listing of histories with the intention of portraying their argument that despite the numerous quantities there is not a single qualitative study that would merit their respect prior to their own.

This absence of a clear definition begs the question of whether the reviews conducted by the Korean Protestant historians are actually a review of "historical studies." If the quality of previous studies is so questionable and leads the Korean Protestant historian to doubt they are "historical studies" we must question, in turn, whether the review itself is fit for purpose. Additionally, if there is no clearly defined criterion for determining how or whether a certain study sets out a history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, then the breadth of materials that could be incorporated into a review of previous histories would be endless. Furthermore, many publications which could not, with integrity, be regarded as historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea could be included depending on the subjective and unilateral decision of the historian purportedly conducting a review of "historical studies" on Protestant Christianity in Korea. A prime example would be the inclusion of many travelogues which contain only brief mention of Protestant Christian missionary activities or extremely subjective narratives of missionary work which are included in the historian's review of previous studies. Reviews of previous studies can become an exercise in presenting carefully chosen references

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[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] *Ibid.*

which further legitimise the historian's particular historiography rather than placing the present study within the historical context of the academic discipline of which it is a part.

A second commonality is that the 'previous historical studies' tend to focus on those works published before 1980. Even when a historian does conduct a review of histories published after 1980 it only includes those dealing with a specific subject that is limited in terms of demographic, denominational and geographic scope. This absence of histories on Protestant Christianity in Korea published after 1980 is difficult to explain away, especially when one considers that a simple topical search into the number of historical studies on Protestant Christianity reveal a list of publications totalling well over two hundred, in English alone, which were published after 1980. Considering that at least two of the historians being reviewed in this thesis conducted their studies well after 1980 it would seem natural for them to include an updated review of previous works that would include those works published after 1980, even if selective and limited. Unfortunately, this is not so.

The question, then, would be why? Why do the Korean Protestant historians systematically limit their review of previous histories to those that were conducted before 1980? A plausible reason can be found in the way that the historical review of previous works published before 1980 is incorporated within the context of the five histories we are reviewing in this thesis. The Korean Protestant historians tend to focus their review of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea upon works which perpetuate a single monolithic narrative of Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea, that of successive growth and progress. In other words, the majority of works reviewed are those that adhere to a teleological perspective of history. As such, they describe and interpret the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea from a simplistic paradigm of growth in institutional and numerical terms. Additionally, the simplistic paradigm that is broadly utilised, uncritically, in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea tends to function as a historical apologetic for the policies and activities of the missionaries. As a result, the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea become little more than a descriptive narration of mission policies, practices and their ensuing product, the institutionalised Korean Protestant Church. Such historical studies reiterate the dominant narrative of success and progress which focuses on the larger denominations. The fact that all five of the histories analysed in this thesis fail

to adequately give an account of the numerous smaller denominational organisations that flourished after the 1960s is a third commonality of the review of previous historical studies conducted by the five Korean Protestant historians which reinforces this critique.

Perhaps the most interesting commonality that the Korean Protestant historians share in their reviews of previous historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea is that they fail to acknowledge any external influences on the discipline, the methodologies utilised, and the perspectives employed in the practice of studying and writing history about Protestant Christianity in Korea. They tend to treat the development of Korean Protestant historiography, including their own, as if it had occurred in a theoretical vacuum, devoid of any influence from external developments in historiography in the general study of Korean history. Because the historiography of the Korean Protestant historian is applied without any regard to the wider context of historical studies on Korea, they describe and interpret the various historical experiences in an exclusivist narrative. This accentuates the purported positive influences, contributions and significance of Protestant Christianity's presence in the historical experience of the Korean people, while minimising and ignoring any other influences or entities that might have been involved. However, contrary to the thinking of the Korean Protestant historians, the review of how modern historiography developed in Korea noted above clearly shows a correlation between it and the development of a Korean Protestant Christian historiography.

## 3. Relating the Streams – Historiographical Developments in Korean Historical Studies and Korean Protestant Christian Historiographies

The brief overview of the developments in Korean historiography and Korean Protestant Christian historiography provides us with a basic foundation for drawing out several parallels between them. The first such parallel would be that both the general historiographies of Korean historical studies and the Korean Protestant historiographies initially developed within the historical context of the colonial experience and its aftermath as a reaction to the imperial historiography that dominated the colonial period. In evaluating the development of Korean Protestant

historiographies it is important to recognise the extent to which Japanese domination influenced the development of historical studies in Korea, both secular and religious. Little has been done in the nearly fifty years since liberation to actually assess the degree of influence that this colonial experience has had, and continues to have, in the lives of the Korean people socially, politically and culturally. As such, the Korean historians have primarily developed their historiographies without an adequate appraisal of the very context that they are attempting to re-interpret through their particular historiographies.

As a result, the Korean historians' attempt at conducting historical studies, particularly that regarding the historical experiences of colonialism, results in a blanket condemnation and negative depiction of anything and everything connected to the colonial experience. However, this fails to appreciate the cultural and academic dynamism which eventually led to the formation and development of alternative historiographies by Koreans during the colonial period. It fails to properly assess those historiographies that attempted to contradict the logic of the imperial historiography. In this regard, the lack of an adequate appreciation of the colonial experience can lead the historian to develop his or her historiography as a tool of rejection rather than a tool with which to readdress the distorted and manipulated histories of the colonial period. This easily distorts historical events to project a teleological depiction and interpretation of Korean history.

When applying this critique specifically to the development of Korean Protestant Christian historiographies we find that the Korean Protestant historian is no better than secular colleagues. The introduction of Protestant Christianity in Korea occurred at the height of imperial expansionism, whether that of China, Europe, the United States, Russia or Japan. However, none of the Korean Protestant historians recognise this imperial/colonial context in which the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea unfolded. Nor do they adequately appraise the manner in which the development of their particular Korean Protestant Christian historiography has been affected by the relationship between imperial historiography and Korean historiography. This results in the histories by Korean Protestant historians engaging in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in a manner identical to the secular historians of Korea. They totally disregard the influences of the colonial experience in affecting the introduction, growth and subsequent development of Protestant Christianity in Korea, theologically, institutionally and

ideologically. Additionally, they further develop their historiographies in a manner which opposes the colonial experience to the perceived nationalistic characteristics of Protestantism. In either case the particular historiography that the Korean Protestant historian develops fails to adequately appraise the colonial context or describe and interpret the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity within that context in a cogent manner. Furthermore, by developing a Korean Protestant Christian historiography that aligns itself too closely with an uncritical appropriation of the nationalistic perspective on the past the Korean Protestant historian too closely aligns the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea with uncritical nationalism.

This leads us to the second parallel, the pervasiveness of a nationalistic orientation in describing and interpreting historic events. We noted how the context in which modern historiography developed in Korea led to the dominance of a nationalistic perspective. The overbearing power of imperial historiography naturally provided a strong incentive for the Korean historians to develop a method and perspective of studying history that would challenge it and the colonial enterprise that it legitimated. We further noted that this tendency for a nationalistic orientation to permeate the practice of historical studies on Korea reached new proportions during the 1950s and received a new political impetus from the 1960s onwards.

Four of the five historiographies presently analysed within this thesis were written after 1970. Although this does not automatically make them nationalistic in orientation, the contents of the histories indicate nationalism pervades all their descriptions and interpretations of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Whether acknowledged or not, Korean Protestant historians learned many of the methodologies of modern historiography against a nationalist background and it has influenced the development of Korean Protestant Christian historiography.

According to the historical accounts presented by the Korean Protestant historians, Protestant Christianity was not only a primary factor behind modernisation and liberation, but in many instances is presented as having been the sole, dominant one. While it is necessary to acknowledge the positive contributions that resulted from Protestant missionary activities and subsequently from the activities of the institutionalised Christian Church, we must also bear in mind that the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea was neither entirely positive

nor constructive. Therefore, simply depicting the historical experience of Protestant Christianity from a nationalistic perspective fails to adequately appraise the historical process by which Protestant Christianity was appropriated as a religion of the Korean people and experienced as such. It merely serves to promote the nationalist credentials of Protestant Christianity in Korea in an uncritical, unbalanced, and in many respects, untruthful manner.

A third parallel is that both the historiographies of general Korean history and Korean Protestant Christian history possess a strong elitist tendency. A large proportion of the histories on Korean history present a chronological narrative which focuses on major political events that led to a change in ruling dynasties. Within the narratives that detail events that unfolded during a particular dynastic era the focal point of the historian's interest remains centred on the activities of the ruling class. The only time the lower strata of Korean society are mentioned is when they become the objects of particular governmental policies or the subject of revolutions and political agitations.

In a similar manner the histories of Korean Protestant Christianity by the Korean Protestant historians primarily deal chronologically with the institutional developments of Protestantism in Korea. The historical narratives tend to centre round a detailed presentation of the manner in which the various institutional activities of the missionaries gradually developed and progressed in both scale and influence. Naturally, the histories tend to gravitate toward the key individuals who were most influential in this process. The emphasis on the institutional dimension of the Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea restricts the narratives to a monotonous repetition of identical aspects of the historical experience with reference to the same individuals.

The elitist tendency of Korean historiography, general as well as Protestant, also leads to a refusal by the historians to recognise the efforts of a *minjung* historiography as an authentic method of describing and interpreting the historical experiences of the Korean people. The strongest issue of contention that the historians of both areas have with regard to a *minjung* historiography is that the historical concept of *minjung* has not been sufficiently defined. Another issue which they regard as disproving the argument for a *minjung* historiography as an authentic tool for studying the history of Korea is that they regard its methodology as requiring further development and refinement.

However, the shortcomings of a *minjung* historiography should not be utilised as a premise on which to alienate the historical experiences of those outside of the institutional structures of church or government. Neither should it be an excuse to minimise their existence and contribution to the broader context in which the historical events that the Korean people, regardless of gender, class or status, experienced together. The presence of perceived deficiencies of a *minjung* historiography cannot legitimate writing out of history the historical experiences of the very people who are the subjects of history. Rather, it should be an imperative which challenges the historian to incorporate the voices of the voiceless in the histories of Korea, secular and religious. Only then can the histories of Korea truly reflect the lived experiences of the Korean people.

**Conclusion**

The above review regarding the developments in historiography clearly reveals a theoretical and contextual connection between general Korean historiographies and Korean Protestant Christian historiographies. To varying degrees each of the five Protestant Christian historiographies analysed in this thesis was influenced by the way in which the historiographies, formulated to describe and interpret the historical experiences of Korea, were themselves each influenced by the particular context of historical events experienced by the Korean people. The single notable historical experience which influenced Korean historiography, and which continues to exert a pervading influence upon the historical study of Korea today, was the colonial experience under the Japanese and the imperial historiography which provided the theoretical basis for its legitimation. As a result, all of the historiographies that were developed by Korean historians inevitably contained the perspectives of nationalism as the central and dominant motif in their method of historical study.

In this respect, the Korean Protestant Christian historiographies formulated by the Korean Protestant historians were no different. Korean Protestant historians are, first and foremost, Koreans. Therefore, by virtue of the fact that they developed their historiographies within an academic environment where the nationalist motif was

dominant, the appropriation of this dominant narrative within their historiographies was regarded not only as natural but imperative in order to clearly portray the contributions of Protestant Christianity in Korea towards the life of the Korean nation. This focus on the nation inclined the Korean Protestant historians to present a narrative of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in terms of quantitative growth. The focus on the institutional successes of Protestantism in Korea also served to strengthen the idea that it was the single most important institutional element that produced positive results, and thereby contributed to the enlightenment project through which the modernisation and westernisation of Korea was achieved. The combination of a nationalistic ideal and the self-perception of itself as a model of enlightenment during the pivotal period of Korea's modernisation became the basis for arguing that Protestant Christianity in Korea was a divinely gifted tool through which the Korean people as a nation were blessed. The fact that Protestantism continued to grow throughout the tumultuous period of the early 20$^{th}$ century, when Korea experienced one of its most difficult periods of history in the form of colonialism, was interpreted as further evidence pointing to the positive contributions of Protestantism as a moral and social force that helped to sustain the integrity of the Korean people. This further contributed to the identification of Protestant success with the preservation of the nationalistic spirit as the Korean Protestant historian began to interpret the religious experiences of Protestantism in cultural and political terms. This eventually led to the Korean Protestant historian appropriating the historical experiences of the Korean people, as a nation, within the historical narratives of Protestant Christianity. Within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the historical experiences of the nation came to be represented by the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. As a result, anything and everything that the Korean Protestant Christians did was automatically interpreted as being both religious and political, furthering both the goals of Christianity and the aspirations of the nation. This, naturally, makes the historical narratives produced by the Korean Protestant historians present Protestant Christianity as the ultimate religion that is destined to save the Korean people, religiously as well as politically. It further leads to the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea taking on a triumphal tone, and creates a historical narrative in which the actions of Protestant Christianity, whatever they may be, are justified by an appeal to nationalist sentiments. The future of the Korean nation, therefore, becomes one and the same as the future of Protestantism in Korea. In this way the

Korean Protestant historian succeeds in masterfully interweaving the historical experiences of the Korean people and that of Protestant Christianity in Korea into a mono-narrative that portrays Korea as a pseudo-Christendom.

As a result of the uncritical appropriation of the nationalistic motif in the development of their historiographies all five of the Korean Protestant historians analysed in this thesis construct their historical narratives in near identical formats. This is because despite the purported difference in perspective and method espoused by the Korean Protestant historian in defending their particular historiography, the actual writing of history is heavily influenced by the dominant nationalistic motif. Consequently, the histories become near identical replicas of institutional success and positive contributions of Protestant Christianity in Korea. As a result, and regardless of the different historiographies advocated by the Korean Protestant historians, the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea become a habitual repetition of historical apologetics concerning the nationalistic contribution of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

By failing to adequately understand and appreciate the academic context in which they conduct their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Korean Protestant historians fail to call the dominant motif of nationalism to account. In this sense, they fail to construct a historiography that adequately challenges either the various presuppositions and practices of imperial historiography or those of nationalist historiography. By failing thus to appropriately address the contextual environment in which their historical studies and the methods and perspectives that they utilise developed, the Korean Protestant historians simply reproduce identical teleologies that contradict the actual lived historical experiences of the Korean people and their experience of Protestant Christianity. Consequently, their 'histories' become nothing more than replicated legitimations of a 'traditionalised' historical narrative that serves to perpetuate and solidify a particular self-understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea, an identity that is historically misconstrued.

# Chapter 2 – A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the Arguments Presented by the Korean Protestant Historians in Defence of their Historiographies

## Introduction

The overview of the context surrounding the development of modern Korean historiography and Korean Protestant Christian historiography in the previous chapter has helped us situate the practice of historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea within its wider academic environment. It has been noted that in spite of the obvious inter-relation between general historical studies on Korea and the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea this relationship had been blatantly ignored by the Korean Protestant historians. It was argued that such ignorance resulted in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians simply reproducing identical teleologies that are, in reality, contradictory to the actual lived historical experiences of the Korean people and their experience of Protestant Christianity. We have further argued that the histories produced by such misinformed historiographies become nothing more than replicated legitimations of a 'traditionalised' historical narrative that serves to perpetuate and solidify a particular self-understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea, an identity that is historically misconstrued. This results in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians degenerating into a repetition of hagiography.

Bearing in mind the above critique of Korean Protestant Christian historiography this chapter will conduct a comparative and critical analysis of five Korean Protestant historians, which will investigate their justifications for their particular methodology for studying the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. All efforts will be made to allow the historians to speak for themselves and to articulate in their own words the various reasons for engaging in what is purported, in each case, to be a new and different historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

In so doing we shall present arguments that challenge some of the perceptions held by the historians as they develop their methodology and perspective. We will also seek to identify how each historian has been influenced by external theoretical developments and whether they acknowledge their debts. We will further endeavour to identify certain commonalities that appear in their methods and perspectives. This will help us to further clarify the manner in which a misinformed historiography leads to a distorted writing of history which eventually culminates in the replicated legitimations of a 'traditionalised' historical narrative serving to perpetuate a particular self-understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

## 1. L. George Paik and his *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910*

L. George Paik (Paik, Lak-jun) was born in March 1895 as the fourth child of a poor farmer in Jeongju, North Pyeongan Province. He attended the Sinseong Middle School from 1910 and was greatly influenced in his formation by George S. McCune, a North Presbyterian Missionary who was deeply involved in educational activities in northern Korea. Paik studied for a period in the Tientsin Theological College from 1913 and from there went to the United States in 1916. He gained degrees from Park College and Princeton University, and finally received his doctoral degree from Yale University in 1925. During his time at Yale he was greatly influenced by Kenneth Scott Latourette, the renowned historian of World Christianity. Although Latourette was not his immediate supervisor for the doctoral thesis Paik was recognised by Latourette as one who had "gone to the pains of obtaining an excellent training in the methods of Western historians and so has acquired skill in the patient collection and evaluation of material and objectivity in interpretation."[86]

Upon returning to Korea in 1927 he became a lecturer at Yeonhee College, the forerunner of the present day Yonsei University. His relation with Yonsei culminated when he became its first Korean President in 1957. In addition to his

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[86] L.George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1970), Foreword.

teaching responsibilities he served as a Trustee for the Joseon Christian Literature Society, which later became the Korean Christian Literature Society, and the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. He was also a member of the Joseon Language Academy and was a founding member of the Jindan Academy and the Joseon Folk Culture Academy. He also served in various capacities of government and international agencies, such as UNESCO.

Although he received his doctoral degree from Yale University by studying the history of Protestant missions in Korea none of his subsequent publications included historical studies. That being said, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* is regarded as a seminal work in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. What set this particular historical study apart from any of the previous historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea, especially those conducted by Koreans, was the fact that Paik was trained in Western approaches to history. Paik's work came to be regarded as the first product by a Korean that laid the foundation of scholastic excellence which was thereafter utilized as the hallmark separating the works of professionals from those of amateurs.

It is not surprising, then, that his history is regarded as the genesis of modern historical scholarship on Protestant Christianity in Korea by a Korean Protestant historian. As such, all four of the subsequent Korean Protestant historians analysed in this thesis consistently use Paik's history as the backdrop against which they formulate their arguments. Each of the four historians acknowledge Paik's work as the origin of a systematic and scientific approach to the subject of Korean Protestant history by a Korean.[87] Paik himself lends weight to such admiration when he proudly remarks that his study is "the first attempt to employ the historical method of study in recording the origin and growth of the Protestant Christian movement in Korea."[88] He contends that prior to his work there had not been a monograph which was "devoted to the story of expansion of Protestant Christianity in Korea."[89] Although there were some historical studies written by missionaries regarding their work in Korea they were "written by men absorbed in the problem of conducting an enterprise on the field, and of keeping a constituency at home in touch with aspects

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[87] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.8; IKCHS ed., *Hanguk Gidoggyo-ui Yoksa* 1, p.2; Kim, Young-jae, *Hanguk Gyowhesa*, p.14; Pak, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.22.

[88] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.5

[89] *Ibid.*, p.4.

of it that appeal to them."[90] As such, according to Paik's evaluation, they are not sufficiently objective in their treatment of the subject and are "necessarily restricted and coloured."[91] This is why Paik has taken it upon himself to undertake a study which would seek to highlight "the success of Christian missions in Korea"[92] from what he regards as an objective view, uncontrolled by the missionaries.

It is interesting to note that Paik regards himself, a Korean Protestant who had received his formal education and training in historical methodology from the United States, as being better able to present an objective rendering of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea than the American missionaries. This was because he saw himself as being further removed from the subjective interests of the mission field than the missionaries and thus better situated to present a more objective historical interpretation of events. From the argument put forth by Paik, it would appear that objectivity centres round the distance between the historical sources and the interpreter. If we are to follow his logic, the further one is removed from the actual sources utilised in engaging in an historical study the more objective that study is likely to be.

This perspective appears to reflect the ideals of historical positivism which originated from Ranke and became prominent during the nineteenth century. Historical positivism believed that an assemblage of the facts relating to history would present us with a picture of the past as it actually was. Carr observes that the great anxiety of the positivists to position history as a legitimate scientific endeavour led them to develop a "cult of facts" and goes so far as to claim that this led to a spate of fetishism regarding facts.[93]

In many respects, Paik's insistence that his is a more objective, and therefore, more authentic historical account of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea is based on his assumption that he is better situated to accumulate and assimilate the evidence relating to the subject that were either not available to the missionaries or had not been of interest because of their subjective approach. Unfortunately, this argument conveniently forgets that "the belief in a

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[90] *Ibid.*, p.5.

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[93] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, p.9.

hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy."[94] Although the facts and the historical documents in which they are preserved and conveyed are essentially important for the work of the historian "they do not by themselves constitute history."[95] These "have still to be processed by the historian before he can make any use of them,"[96] and whether these fact attain a "status as a historical fact will turn on a question of interpretation."[97] Therefore, to use the words of Professor Barraclough quoted by Carr, "The history we read, though based on facts, is strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgments."[98]

Contrary to what Paik alleges, we must argue strongly that "the past is never the past."[99] This is because "when we talk about the past ... we inevitably project our present perspectives into the past."[100] As a result, "there is thus a complex, ambiguous boundary between past events, our present circumstance resulting in part as a product of the past, and our interpretation of the event."[101] Therefore, distance from the historical events which supplied the sources does not automatically equate with detached objectivity in investigation of those sources.

Furthermore, the fact that he relies primarily "on original documents and official reports of the various mission boards and agencies at home, and of missionary groups on the field"[102] for his study raises the issue of objectivity in a different way. The problem lies in the fact that he has chosen to rely on written materials which can be regarded as already reflecting a particular outlook of the writer in relation to its contents. The documents that he refers to as providing a source of information for his narrative and interpretation of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea are "but a trace" of the actual historical events which unfolded.[103] The

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[94] *Ibid.*, p.12.

[95] *Ibid.*, p.19.

[96] *Ibid.*, p.16.

[97] *Ibid.*, pp.12-3.

[98] *Ibid.*, p.14.

[99] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History – An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1995), p.33.

[100] *Ibid.*, p.33.

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.5.

[103] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History,* p.37.

documentary evidence that has been left to posterity as "traces of history are not concrete, neither are they complete."[104] This is because "we preserve what we view as important."[105] As a result "the very evidences the historian examines are far from neutral."[106] In addition, "'outlook' in the observer as historian is crucial. From selecting data, classifying its relative significance, and giving shape to understanding of an event itself, what is seen as worthy of scrutiny and what is not seen or 'overlooked' has profound implications."[107] Therefore, by electing to base his interpretation and narrative of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity solely on mission related sources, Paik's desire to "best describe and interpret objectively what actually happened"[108] is obfuscated rather than enhanced.

Additionally, the issue of "impartial objectivity" regarding Paik's inquiry also presents us with difficult issues that require further consideration. Contrary to his presumptions, the distance of the historian from the sources cannot be used as an indicator for determining the degree of objectivity maintained by the historian throughout the historical inquiry. This is because "the researcher's initial orientation determines a great deal about the methods of investigation that he or she eventually adopts."[109] In Paik's instance, the initial orientation of his historical inquiry is to examine the "influence of the Christian propaganda on human progress" as it pertains to the Korean experience of Protestant Christianity.[110] As such, the focal point of his study is in exploring the "success of Christian missions in Korea."[111] The goal of historical inquiry for Paik is to present a descriptive account of the "rapid growth of Christian communities, the early naturalisation of Christianity in the Korean environment, and the far-reaching influence of the religion on the thought and life of the people."[112] Despite his sincere desire to present an objective narrative

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[104] *Ibid.*, p.37.

[105] *Ibid.*

[106] *Ibid.*, p.38.

[107] Robert Eric Frykenberg, *History and Belief – The Foundations of Historical Understanding* (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), p.10.

[108] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.5.

[109] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), p.4.

[110] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.3.

[111] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[112] *Ibid.*

of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the selection of objectives and the appointment of particular goals for his historical inquiry serve to undermine this quest for objectivity. Paik is engaging in his historical inquiry from a particular outlook. Despite the claims to impartial objectivity, his prioritisation of sources, the interpretive framework within which he works and the end result are all influenced by the particular standpoint of origin. In the end, he cannot escape the fact that "no representation of the past ... escapes the contingent nature of the standpoint from which it was written."[113]

By engaging in a historical investigation of Protestant Christianity in Korea to show its successful and heroic endeavours, Paik subjugates the integrity of his history to a teleological interpretation which tends to "present large generalisations about the nature and direction of all events."[114] In this respect, it is interesting to note that the items he uses for interpreting the establishment of Protestant Christianity in Korea as being successful are primarily limited to activities with quantitative characteristics. Yet, he utilises these quantitative activities to argue a qualitative transformation of Korean society. By first presenting the negative circumstances that necessitated the initiation of a particular activity by the Missions and then proceeding to describe in detail how this work was gratefully received by the Korean people and resulted in bringing about individual and social change, he attempts to highlight the contribution of Protestant mission endeavours. This is then followed by a description of how this work expanded and developed to such an extent that it was able to influence the wider society thereby infusing a modernising and enlightening character to the social and cultural context of Korea. This narrative format enhances Paik's description of Protestant Christianity as both a social transformative power and a morally stimulating religion. This also highlights the positive contributions that he regards Protestant Christianity to have brought in renewing and reforming the Korean people. The end result of Paik's history is to present a historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea along the lines of what Herbert Butterfield termed "the Whig interpretation of history."[115]

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[113] Ronald A. Wells ed., *History and the Christian Historian* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), p.6.

[114] Robert Eric Frykenberg, *History and Belief*, p.251.

[115] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931), p.v.

To a certain extent, one can grant that Paik was successful in describing how the Protestant Christian mission enterprise succeeded in Korea. In thinking that he could achieve this in a scientific and objective manner he was faithful to the prevailing attitude toward history of his time. His attempts to employ "a greater scientific concern for the analysis of the original documents"[116] provided Korean Protestant historiography with a base for establishing a criterion for professionalism. However, by employing the documentary evidence to prove a predetermined goal, i.e. Protestant Christianity's success in Korea, Paik failed to sustain an impartial interpretation. Furthermore, by simply focusing on the successful activities of the Missions, he failed to properly analyse the wider context within which the historical events unfolded. By thus failing to possess a coherent grasp of that context Paik, perhaps unintentionally, assimilated, and therefore misinterpreted the documentary evidence in light of his contemporary cultural and intellectual milieu. As such, the historical narrative he presented was more of an attempt to "illustrate … how clearly the past reveals the inevitable emergence of those present conditions favoured by the historian," [117] namely the successful entrenchment of Protestantism in Korea, reflecting an "instinctive, non-reflective partisanship."[118] Though he engaged in "prodigious research, it was research with a purpose, and a purpose firmly fixed before the research even begins."[119] In short, Paik's history primarily functions as a "Whig interpretation of history" which focuses solely on "progress in the past" in order to "produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present."[120]

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[116] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History*, p.13.

[117] Mark A. Noll, "The Potential of Missiology for the Crises of History" in Ronald A. Wells ed., *History and the Christian Historian*, p.114.

[118] *Ibid.*, p.115.

[119] *Ibid.*

[120] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, p.v.

## 2. Min, Gyeong Bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church)

The next historian who is the subject of our comparative and critical analysis is Min, Gyeong-bae. Min received his first degree from Yonsei University and went on to study for his doctorate at Doshisha University, Japan. He has had a long career in teaching which began as an Assistant Professor in the Theological Department of Yonsei University. He is now President of Seoul Jangshin University.

Min is best known in the field of Protestant historical studies for advocating a Korean national-church perspective of historical study. This particular perspective developed as a methodology for historical study during the 1970s and was first introduced through what is widely regarded as his seminal study of Protestant Christianity in Korea based on this approach. This study was published as *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church), first published in 1972 and revised substantially in 1982. His national-church paradigm led to later publications, such as *Hangug Minjoggyowhe Hyeongseongsaron* (A Historical Treatise on the Development of a Korean National Church) (1974) and *Gyowhewa Minjok* (Church and Nation) (1981), which further developed his theoretical framework.

In developing his methodology and perspective Min attempted a radical departure from the single individual whom he regarded as being his predecessor in presenting a scientific study of Protestant Christianity in Korea, L. George Paik. Attempting to overcome a crucial shortcoming of Paik's perspective and methodology, Min sought to present a history of Protestant Christianity which "takes upon itself the great responsibility of writing a subjective (*juchejeok*) history of the Korean National Church."[121] He regards his history as presenting an independent

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[121] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.16. It is important to clarify the Korean term which is here translated as "subjective." Min uses the Korean term "*juchejeok*." Although in English this is translated as "subjective" we need to differentiate the Korean term with another Korean term also translated "subjective" in English, "*jugwanjeok*." *Jugwanjeok* refers to a degree of subjectivity in terms of interpretation. In other words, the subjectivity of this term lies in the nature of the interpretation being rendered by the interpreter. To "be *jugwanjeok*" is "to be advancing a particular opinion with regard to something or someone." In this sense it is antonymous with the English term "objective" used in the sense of implying an interpretation without involvement of personal opinion or interest. However, *juchejeok* refers to a subjectivity in relation to that which is under investigation. To "be *juchejeok*" means "to attempt an interpretation or rendering of something independently from outside influence." In this sense it is synonymous with "independent" as in an "independent inquiry

and subjective (*juchejeok*) history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, taking the Korean dimension of its development as the primary subject of history. In so doing, Min wanted to present an alternative historiography and a more thorough "Korean" presentation of the Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea. In Min's view Paik's study of Protestant Christianity in Korea was "entirely a history of the expansion of Christian missions and, therefore, one-directional because most of the sources have been gathered from the countries, the churches and individuals who had sent missionaries to Korea." According Min, Paik "totally failed to consider the witness and testimonies of the Korean Christians"[122] within his historical narrative.

Min regards his particular historiography as overcoming this deficiency in Paik's historical investigation of Protestant Christianity in Korea by employing "a methodology which treats the Korean church as the subject of Church history and narrates it from a perspective of the history of the Korean National Church."[123] It is Min's contention that this historiography will "bring out the undulating life and experiences of the Korean Church and present a history which will appeal to the dynamic interaction of our life and faith."[124] Min identifies the scope of his study as "primarily focusing on the historical transformation of the faith of the Church."[125] Min contends that the events portrayed in his historical study are those in which "the faith of the Church has extended into society to influence and affect it."[126]

One of the interesting characteristics of Min's historical study is the fact that he is the first Korean Protestant historian to recognise the denominational diversity of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Although he recognises that a plethora of

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by a disinterested third party." In translating both "*jugwanjeok*" and "*juchejeok*" nearly all of the Korean-English dictionaries available today both use the single English term "subjective." However, in light of the fact that there exist slight but significant cognitive nuances between *jugwanjeok* and *juchejeok* it was felt for the purposes of this critical and comparative analysis that the English term "subjective" needed to be qualified with the Korean word in brackets in order to better highlight Min's argument for his particular methodology and perspective qualifying as being unique and different from that of Paik. To sum up his argument, Min is attempting to differentiate between his and Paik's methods and perspectives on the basis of reliance upon, in contrast to independence from, outside influences and in this sense is attempting a "subjective" (*juchejeok*) interpretation of the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

[122] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[123] *Ibid.*

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] *Ibid.*, p.v.

[126] *Ibid.*

denominational sects exist within what could be termed the "Korean National Church" Min regards a history of the "Korean National Church" as being different from a history which deals primarily with denominational origins and developments. According to Min, "the mere compilation of materials relating to particular denominations is not the realm of interest belonging to Church history."[127] In Min's view, it is nearly impossible "to engage in a qualitative narrative of each denomination because the introduction, fragmentation, division and union of the denominations have led to a profuse number of denominations in Korea."[128] For this reason Min contends that a history of the "Korean National Church" is an attempt to "systematically organise particular facts within the overall flow of the history of the Church in Korea."[129] From this perspective "denominational history is relevant to such a narrative only in so far as it has a particular relationship to this overall history of the Church in Korea."[130]

The question arises, then, what exactly comprises this "Korean National Church" whose historical experience Min is attempting to narrate. Unfortunately, he does not provide us with a clear and succinct definition of what he terms the "Korean National Church." He half-heartedly attempts to explain his concept of a "Korean National Church" by elaborating what his use of the term does not imply. In the first instance, his "Korean National Church" is different from "the notorious *volkskirche* ... or a consciousness as a chosen people."[131] Neither is it related to "a nationalism that appeals to the Spirit of the nation."[132] Unfortunately, the vagueness of this concept is little alleviated by his history and the reader is unable to pinpoint just what this central concept actually is. This vagueness in defining the single significant and important term utilised in his historical study weakens his historiography from the outset.

However, it is not only in the vagueness and lack of definition concerning the central concept of a "Korean National Church" that the effectiveness of his historiography becomes suspect. The question of how one can effectively correlate

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[127] *Ibid.*, p.vii.

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] *Ibid.*

[130] *Ibid.*

[131] *Ibid.*, p.17.

[132] *Ibid.*

the historical experiences of the Korean nation with that of Protestant Christianity in Korea is also a substantial issue which he fails to address properly. Despite expressing his motive and desire as that of presenting a historical narrative which integrates national and Protestant Christian historical experience the end result of his historical project leaves many unresolved issues. For the most part, his narrative is primarily composed of replications concerning the successes, positive contributions, and heroic exploits of Protestant Christianity as a missionary activity or institution alongside those of certain individual Korean Protestant Christians. Unfortunately for Min, this emphasis on the positive and successful exploits of Protestant Christianity reiterates much of the contents dealt with in Paik's historical study. In fact, Min's historical study closely resembles Paik's in the way the narrative is structured, as well as much of the subject matter. The single significant difference that one could credit to Min's historical study is that he attempts to provide a more stringent and cogent interpretation of the positive and successful exploits of Protestant Christianity by utilising an interpretive framework based on his perceived ideals of nationalism. The major methodological tool he employs to this end is a process of interaction between the faith of the individual Protestant Christian or the wider community of the Church and the historical experience of the nation. He describes this particular perspective and methodology in the form of "internal combustion and external dynamism."[133]

However, the greatest weakness of this format is that it fails to adequately describe the religious dimensions of how an individual internalised the Protestant Christian faith in such a way that it influenced his or her participation in and contribution to the historical experience of the nation. In spite of his statements depicting the logical relationship between the internalised combustion of faith and the external expression of dynamism, his narratives portray events by first referring to how the external dynamic influence, the historical event in the life of the nation, become the primary force which brings about an outward manifestation of the internalised Protestant Christian faith. In effect, the so-called internal combustion of faith is simply utilised as a proof-text of the perceived external dynamism of Protestant Christianity in the historical experiences of the Korean nation.

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[133] *Ibid.*, p.v.

The most prominent problem with this model of description and interpretation stems from how it relates Protestant Christian faith to the ideal of nationalism. In Min's descriptive and interpretive paradigm of internal combustion and external dynamism Protestant Christian faith becomes one and the same with nationalism. As such, nearly all of the events described in his historical study describe the various circumstances surrounding it, the individuals involved and their resulting phenomena primarily in nationalistic terms. Within this paradigm there is little room for a religious or theological exploration or description of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity.

This paradigm also presents a problematic narration of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity because it focuses almost entirely on the positive and successful exploits of the Protestant Christian community in Korea. As a result, the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea as described by Min becomes an exercise in historical apologetics that glorifies the contributions of Protestant Christianity in Korea by presenting it within an exalted narrative of the Korean nation. This history can be classified as an "ideological or pre-modern" history that "is one of the most potent allies of nationalistic blood lust."[134] Much like the romantic nationalist histories of nineteenth century Europe, the historiography Min advocates is an "effort to discover the distinctive *Geiste*"[135] of the Korean people through the medium of a particular religion's historical experience despite his rejection of the national church as *Volkskirche*.

In the end, Min replicates many of the contentious traits found in Paik's historiography by producing a "Whig interpretation of history" which focuses solely on "progress in the past" in order to "produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present."[136] Even worse, his history contains all the trademarks of what can be referred to as "tribal history": a history written by "scholarship fashioned with private, factional, parochial, or ethnic, in a word, non-public criteria for what counts for good evidence, reliable warrants, and sound conclusions."[137] Although his history is not inaccurate in the strictest sense,

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[134] Mark A. Noll, "The Potential of Missiology for the Crises of History", p.114.

[135] *Ibid.*

[136] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, p.v.

[137] Mark A. Noll, "The Potential of Missiology for the Crises of History", p.115.

nevertheless it suffers from "an inordinate attention to details, yet all linked by explanatory frameworks that only insiders find credible."[138] In a word, his historiography presents the reader with a historical description of Protestant Christianity in Korea which is the result of an "instinctive, non-reflective partisanship."[139]

Whether the Korean Protestant historian can properly integrate the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity and those of the Korean people as a nation without severely damaging the integrity of one or the other remains questionable. The issue of how a Korean Protestant historian chooses to construct and define his concept of the Korean nation is also something which deserves a more detailed critical analysis. These and other questions pertaining to the relationship between Protestant Christianity and the Korean nation will have to be addressed at a later stage when we deal more specifically with the contents of the histories. For the purpose of critically examining Min's historiography in light of its assertions and applications suffice it to state that the greatest weakness of such a nation-centred description and interpretation is that it relates the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea with that of the Korean people as a nation in a teleological manner. This in turn leads to a tendency to make overly simplified generalisations about the historical experience of both Protestant Christianity and the Korean people. It further tends to postulate a certain degree of historical determinism which attempts to find within the historical experience of the Korean people a coherent expression of Korea as a divinely sanctioned nation, thereby blurring the line between myth and history.[140]

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[138] *Ibid.*

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] Robert E. Frykenberg, *History and Belief*, p.251.

### 3. The Institute of Korean Church History Studies, *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* (A History of the Korean Church)

As the number of individual historians with an avid interest in studying the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea began to grow, a conscientious effort took place to bring the work of these individual scholars together. One of the prominent results of such efforts took the form of an Association for Korean Church History Studies in 1982. This gradually developed into the present Institute of Korean Church History Studies in 1990. One of the contributions that the Association, and later the Institute, sought to bring to the historical study of Christianity in Korea was to incorporate the results of individual research, which had been the dominant norm, into a constructive process of cooperative study and publication. Additionally, the Institute endeavoured to gather and restore numerous sources that could contribute to the historical study of Christianity in Korea.

As this emphasis on the cooperative approach to historical studies of Christianity in Korea indicates, the Institute begins its historical studies with the rhetorical question of whether a proper study of the history of Christianity in Korea can be undertaken within the limited perspective of a particular historiography shaped by an individual historian. The Institute maintains that although this is not impossible the end results of such efforts are debatable at best and deeply suspect at worst.

However, this objection does not imply an argument for wholly disregarding the utilitarian nature of historiography as a perspective and method of studying history itself. Rather, the Institute is questioning the particular position from which the historian in question begins his or her historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In other words, their concern is that the particular historiography developed and utilised by an individual historian will inadvertently reflect the specific denominational background from which the historian derives his or her understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This concern raised by the Institute can be regarded as reflecting an awareness of the fact that Protestantism in Korea, from its earliest stages of introduction, was denominational in nature. Therefore, the Institute naturally assumes that those historians who engage in a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea would possess a particular denominational background. As such, although the historian may argue that his or her historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is representative of

Protestantism in Korea, the end result would simply illuminate the historical experiences of their particular denomination under the guise of representing Protestant Christianity in Korea.

In light of such inherent dangers of individual historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Institute advocates four specific goals which they feel substantially differentiate their study from those of individual historians, both in terms of scope and breadth. The first is that the practice of the Institute allows for them to overcome "the implosive characteristic of historical studies on Christianity in Korea."[141] For the Institute, the previous historical studies of Christianity in Korea have presented a partisan history, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. Regardless of the tradition or denominational orientation, the histories of Christianity in Korea thus far written have been unable to transcend sectarian interests. The Institute regards this as reflecting the theological bias which has accompanied the historical study of Christianity in Korea as conducted by theologian/historians, necessarily constrained by their sectarian affiliations. Therefore, as members of an institution that does not represent any entrenched sectarian interests and is not intent upon trumpeting a particular tradition over another, the Institute regards itself as being better suited to present an authentically objective history of Christianity in Korea. According to the Institute, the objective history that results from their efforts will "allow a proper evaluation of the histories of churches and individuals who had been relegated to the margins of history because of theoretical arguments over doctrinal and political issues or because of their denominational size."[142] In relation to this goal it is interesting to note that the Institute is the first group of Korean Protestant historians to advocate a historical perspective which regards the historical relationship between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Korea "not as discontinuous, but as being conjoined and in conversation with each other."[143]

The second goal of the Institute is to "widen the scope of the historical study of Christianity in Korea."[144] The Institute seeks to write a history of Christianity in Korea which "does not merely view a history of Christianity in Korea as simply

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[141] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.9.

[142] *Ibid.*

[143] *Ibid.*, p.12.

[144] *Ibid.*, p.9.

belonging to the realm of Christian History but illuminates it from within the wider framework of national history."[145] Therefore, the main objective of the Institute is to "investigate and present the influence of Divine Providence in the modern and contemporary history of Korea."[146] The ideals contained in the first goal are closely related with this second goal, particularly the argument that the Roman Catholic and Protestant historical experience can be perceived as being something other than discontinuous. From the Institute's point of view, the historical experiences of both traditions can be amalgamated within the historical experience of the Korean nation. In this respect, their perspective closely resembles the historiography of Min, Geyong-bae discussed above. The single difference between the two nation-centred perspectives is that Min is content to elaborate the merits of Protestant historical experience contributing to national interests while depicting the Roman Catholic historical experience as having been contrary to them. In contrast, the Institute considers the historical experiences of both traditions as contributing to the broader interpretational framework of a nationalist history.

The third goal of the Institute is to present a history of Christianity in Korea "which can react responsibly to the present and future issues facing the nation." The Institute claims that

> by investigating the history of the faithful who reacted responsibly to issues facing the nation in the past we can not only discover the tradition of nationalistic activity within the history of the Church in Korea but can also prepare ourselves (i.e. Christians) to better contribute to the future issues of re-unification and democratisation.[147]

This would appear to be a goal which encompasses the previous two in its scope and assumed objective. By widening the scope of historical inquiry regarding Christianity in Korea, the Institute is attempting to present a historical description

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[145] *Ibid.*

[146] *Ibid.*, p.1.

[147] *Ibid.*, pp.9-10.

and interpretation which will not only accentuate past contributions to national interests but also exemplify a model for future interaction.

The final goal of the Institute is to "engage the sources of the history of Christianity in Korea in a scientific and objective manner."[148] This goal appears to be a natural culmination when one considers that the three goals thus far expounded imply a methodological lack of professionalism in the theologian/historians' attempts to present a history of Christianity in Korea.

In many ways, the goals advanced by the Institute resemble the three qualifications for a Christian historian advanced by the Conference on Faith and History (CFH) in the United States. Much like the CFH, the Institute is comprised of individuals trained in the field of historical studies, particularly Korean history, who conduct research and teach within the context of the secular college or university. Additionally, the members of the Institute all share "a profound faith in the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ." They also share a common understanding of "the nature of man, of time, and of the universe" as well as a "mastery of the craft and of the art of the historian."[149]

Not only do the intentions of the Institute closely mirror those of the CFH, they also commonly adhere "to the notion that the development of human history has direction, purpose, and meaning."[150] The reference to Divine Providence in the historical quest of the Institute clearly denotes their confessional interpretation of where the meaning of human history lies. Therefore, for the Institute the enterprise of Christian history is all about how best to describe and interpret the various events in human history as they reflect this Divine Providence. In this respect, the perspectives and methodology of the Institute also resembles that of the nineteenth century when "Christian historians wished to link all previous history to one universal story, informed by their faith" and, therefore, "explained events by reference to God's direct divine intervention."[151]

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[148] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[149] D.G. Hart, "History in Search of Meaning: The Conference on Faith and History" in Ronald A. Wells ed., *History and the Christian Historian*, p.68.

[150] *Ibid.*, p.85.

[151] Joyce Abbleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, p.58.

Unfortunately, the Institute fails to recognise that "without the special revelation God gave to the apostles and through the risen Christ, twentieth-century Christians, just like the early church, cannot know the meaning of God's perspective of any historical event."[152] Although the Institute may be justified in critiquing the historiographies of individual theologian/historians as being theologically biased in favour of a particular denomination or sect of Christianity, their claim to be engaged in a historical inquiry that can decipher the hand of Divine Providence within human history falls into the same danger of presenting a historical narrative which is equally biased. The uniqueness of a Christian perspective "is more about our angle of vision than about the actual subject matter of history."[153] Furthermore, as historians who are Christians, "our membership in the academy requires that we present that insight in a proximate, not an ultimate way."[154] This is because "while we have something to contribute, it is not something entirely different from our non-Christian fellow historians."[155] As George Marsden stated,

> Christian scholars need not violate the legitimate rules of the academic game. Rather, as in a court of law, it does no good in the mainstream academy to try to settle an issue by an appeal to a special revelation. We must, instead, argue for our perspectives according to standards of argument and evidence accessible to people from a wide variety of other viewpoints.[156]

In this respect, the historiography of the Institute appears to retreat from rather than advance the historiographical development of Korean Christianity, both Roman Catholic and Protestant.

The above quotation also raises questions regarding the argument for a scientific and objective approach that the Institute declares as one of its goals. As professional

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[152] *Ibid.*, p.86.

[153] Ronald A. Wells, *History and the Christian Historian*, p.4.

[154] *Ibid.*

[155] *Ibid.*

[156] George M. Marsden, "What Difference Might Christian Perspectives Make?" in Ronald A. Wells ed., *History and the Christian Historian*, p.11.

historians, the Institute seems to take for granted that their professionalisation guarantees "a scientific attitude of detachment," having learned "the self-discipline necessary to go beyond self-interest, bias, prejudice, and present-day concerns."[157] However, even this goal of a scientific and objective history, were it possible, is undermined by the logical inconsistencies contained within the four goals of the Institute. More specifically, the Institute's avowed third goal is to present a history of Christianity in Korea "which can react responsibly to the present and future issues facing the nation."[158] In order to achieve this goal, the Institute attempts to discover within the historical experiences of Christianity in Korea "the history of the faithful who reacted responsibly to issues facing the nation in the past" so that present day Christians "can not only discover the tradition of nationalistic activity within the history of the church in Korea but also prepare ourselves (i.e. Christians) to better contribute to the future issues of re-unification and democratisation."[159] This seems to suggest that the presuppositions of the Institute will undoubtedly "influence, to one degree or another, the questions asked of the past and the interpretive structures to construct and interpret the past."[160] The blatant expressions of subjectivism contained in the one are irreconcilable with the claims of an unbiased, scientific and objective history expressed in the other.

Further complicating this appeal to objectivity and scientific inquiry is the nationalistic orientation of the Institute's methodology and perspectives as expressed in its stated overall objective: "to investigate and present the influence of Divine Providence in the modern and contemporary history of Korea."[161] The Institute's appeal to a nationalistic interpretation of the historical experiences of Christianity in Korea can be critiqued along the same lines by which Min's historiography was critiqued above. However, the greatest significant difference between the two is that the Institute makes a direct appeal to Divine Providence in its history. In addition to the critique detailed above which identified the dangers of relating a professional scholarly research of historical experiences with appeals to special revelation, the

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[157] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, p.75.

[158] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.9-10.

[159] *Ibid.*, p.10.

[160] Ronald A. Wells, ed., *History and the Christian Historian*, p.1.

[161] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.1.

history of the Institute further complicates the issue by merging its appeal to Divine Providence with an appeal to nationalistic sentiments.

By choosing to utilise the interpretive structure of nationalism for its historical inquiry, the Institute is advancing a notion of the Korean nation which evokes "the very modern concept of men and women self-consciously banded together into a political union."[162] Unfortunately, the Institute does not explain how its concept of the Korean nation was structured. Much like Min, it simply assumes that this notion of the Korean nation exists *a priori* in the mind of the reader and, as such, needs no elaboration. The logical and historical fallacies that such an assumption makes will be elaborated at a later stage. However, it must be noted that the ascription of this mythical trans-historical quality to the concept of the Korean nation, combined with the mystical concept of Divine Providence, can lead to a historical narrative of Christianity in Korea which is overly subjective, both in terms of its ethno-centricity which negates the universal character of Christianity, as well as its misappropriation of the divine in order to justify or demonise the actions of one group over that of another.

Consequently, though denouncing the inherent bias of theologically coloured histories, the Institute itself is advancing a perspective and methodology that possesses strong theological and ideological connotations. Additionally, the Institute's perspective and methodology presents a triumphalist history which tends to "lean toward historicism: linking past and future, remote antiquity to remote destiny, as a closed chain of inevitable events."[163] By employing such perspectives and methodology in the interpretation of the historical experiences of Christianity in Korea, the Institute not only, again, presents a Whig interpretation of history, it presents a history which isolates the Christian experience even from the wider experience of the Korean people whom it claims to represent.

Mention must be made at this juncture with regard to the manner in which the three historiographies analysed above commonly appeal to a nationalistic perspective of historical interpretation yet fail to acknowledge its origins. L. George Paik, Min, Gyeong-bae and members of the Institute seem to take for granted that the history of Protestant Christianity is inevitably nationalistic in its orientation and realm of

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[162] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, p.92.

[163] Robert Eric Frykenberg, *History and Belief*, p.315.

interest. However, as we have noted in the previous chapter, the nationalistic orientation of Korean modern historiography was informed by, influenced in relation to, and developed in conjunction with, the colonial experience and the imperial historiography that supported it. Therefore, the prominence of a nationalist historiography was an attempt by the Korean historical institution to conduct historical studies of Korea and write its history in opposition to that produced by imperial historiography. This was conducted, primarily, through the production and application of a "binary logic of true nation / anti-nation" that sought to produce a single legitimate outcome of nation building in its historical narratives.[164]

Unfortunately, the Korean Protestant historian falls prey to this binary logic of nationalist historiography. By placing the historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea within nationalism all three historians subsume their particular Protestant Christian historiography under that of the nationalistic historiography. This leads them to develop a narrative in which the binary logic of true nation / anti-nation is uncritically applied to the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity. The end result is a history in which the positive actions of Protestant Christianity are interpreted as contributing to the building of a true nation. Unfortunately, such a history blatantly ignores and omits any experiences that may have negative connotations on the relationship of Protestant Christianity with the interests of the nation, thereby jeopardising its status as a contributory factor to nation building. The problem with such a history is that it portrays Protestant Christianity as having been staunchly anti-colonial and immutably pro-national in its activities. Such a glorified depiction of Protestant Christianity in Korea may serve the interests of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that seeks to promote the nationalistic credentials of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It may even further enhance the radiance of the hagiographic nature of the three histories. However, it commits the critical sin of omitting and editing the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea in order to satisfy its own historically formulated identity.

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[164] Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson, "Rethinking Colonial Korea" in Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson ed., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp.2-3.

## 4. Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Church)

The three previous historical studies are all attempts to relate the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea with those of the Korean people. However, during the 1990s a different approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea began to emerge which sought to study its historical development in relation to a particular theological tradition: Reformed. The first historian to advocate a historiography which acknowledges the centrality of a specific theological basis in is development was Kim, Young-jae. Kim hails from one of the more conservative Presbyterian denominations in Korea, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapshin) and was educated at Clifton Theological College in Bristol. He completed his doctorate at the Philips Universität zu Marburg in Germany, receiving the Th.D. degree with his thesis entitled, *Der Protestantismus in Korea und die Calvinistische Tradition.* Upon returning to Korea he became a Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Hapdong Theological Seminary located in Suwon. In addition to his *Hangug Gyowhesa* he also published *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Je-insik* (Korean Christianity Reconsidered), *Gyowhewa Sinang-gobek* (The Church and Its Confessions) and *Gyowhewa Yebe* (Church and Worship).

The primary argument he advances in developing his historiography is that "when one is writing a history of the Church in Korea one must be aware of the Tradition of the Church."[165] According to Kim, the traces of this Tradition can be found within the theological tradition of the missionaries. This is because he believes "the early missionaries gave to the Korean Church a puritan form of pietistic faith which formed the basic character of the Church in Korea."[166] Therefore, the Korean Protestant historian must perform a dual task. He must first "endeavour to know what typology of faith the early missionaries to Korea adhered to."[167] Additionally, he must "further question how Protestantism in the west developed theologically and historically."[168]

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[165] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.29.

[166] *Ibid.*

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] *Ibid.*

According to Kim's argument, it would appear that in order to properly describe and interpret the historical phenomena of Protestantism in Korea the historian must first study the missionary and the context from whence they came. This would require that the historian of Protestant Christianity in Korea be thoroughly trained in the history of western Christianity. This argument gives the appearance of attempting to place the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea within a wider perspective of a global Christian historical experience and relevant developments. However, the manner in which he approaches this issue compels the Korean Protestant historian to look toward the historical experiences of western Christianity in order to identify a criterion by which he or she can properly describe and interpret the Korean experience of Protestant Christianity so that it will conform to the normative experience of the 'Tradition' of Christianity.

An interesting point in Kim's argument is that he directs the historian's attention solely to the traces of tradition as it was taught and conveyed by the "early missionaries." For Kim, the "early missionaries" are the primary source of the Tradition that characterises and defines Protestant Christianity in Korea. The reference to the "early missionaries," by implication, acknowledges the existence of others who could be termed "later missionaries." By choosing to differentiate between the two, Kim is also implicitly acceding to the possibility that the two may have held different typologies of faith, and hence different theological positions. Unfortunately, he fails to present any credible argument for how and why he determines the typology of faith and the theological orientation of the "early missionaries" to have been more influential than that of the "later missionaries." He further fails to present a historical account of whether there have been any significant shifts in theological orientation within the Korean Protestant establishment, and if so, how and why it came about. In this respect he fails to acknowledge the theological developments of western Christianity represented in the different theological positions held by the early missionaries in contrast to those who came later. He further fails to acknowledge the possibility of a Korean contribution by emphasising the influences of the missionaries and regarding their influence alone as crucial to the formation of a Korean Protestant identity. As a result, the application of his historiography in the depiction and interpretation of Protestant Christian experiences in Korea degenerates into an overly simplified and narrow historical account of the types of faith and theological perspectives of the earliest missionaries. In effect, his historiography limits the scope of possible historical inquiry primarily to that of

mission history and so runs the risk of simply presenting a narrative of missionary attitudes, approaches and activities. This history is, for all intents and purposes, identical to that of Paik.

A further issue arises as a result of Kim's attempts to differentiate between a history of Christianity and a history of the Church. According to his definitions a history of Christianity "is an attempt to present a historical narrative of the propagation and growth of Christianity from the perspective of a history of religions or history of cultures."[169] From this perspective Christianity is regarded simply as "one of the religions of the world."[170] A history of the Church, on the other hand, "places a greater emphasis on the Church and presupposes a confession of faith regarding the Church."[171] In this sense, Church history "is the historical interest in the Church of Christ as well as concern for the Church today."[172] Therefore, from this perspective Church history "is presupposed by one's ecclesiology, i.e. understanding of what Church is."[173]

This line of argument seems to mirror closely the position adopted by the Institute when they sought to present a historical account of Protestant Christianity in Korea which would be faithful to their status as confessing Christians. By advocating that a proper historical study of the Church necessitates an ecclesiological perspective, Kim is emphasising the subjectivity of the historian. While it is true that we are no longer able to claim complete objectivity in our historical studies, the limitations of that objectivity do not condone an intentionally subjective interpretation. In fact, the danger of subjectivity in historical inquiry requires that the historian attempt to establish objectivity in his or her practice of historical studies by adhering much more stringently to the regimen of academic investigation. An example of such an endeavour would be an effort "to develop a stance of methodologically controlled objectivity."[174] This implies that "the fundamental religious or spiritual commitment of the investigator" should not lead to a result

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[169] *Ibid.*, p.24.

[170] *Ibid.*, p.25.

[171] *Ibid.*

[172] *Ibid.*

[173] *Ibid.*

[174] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History*, p.xi.

which would be incompatible with the possible outcomes of other investigators.[175] The argument that the historian needs to possess a particular ecclesiology in order to properly conduct a historical investigation of the Church holds the danger of prematurely limiting the scope of the inquiry to a writer's understanding of Church and his or her specific ecclesiology. In this sense, it becomes a historical account or defence of a particular tradition within the Church. As such, the ecclesiological foundation of the historian works not only to hinder the process of historical inquiry but also inadvertently severs the historian from what can be regarded as a wider Tradition of the Church.

The emphasis on ecclesiology and Church history leads Kim to advance another interesting argument in the development of his historiography. By focusing on ecclesiology in relation to historiography he attempts to differentiate between Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian history in Korea. He criticises the efforts of Korean Protestant historians to incorporate Roman Catholic historical experiences into their history of Protestant Christianity as being futile. This is because he regards such efforts to be an attempt at reconciling two totally different ecclesiological positions. He argues, further, that "Catholicism and Protestantism were propagated as two different religions in Korea and have no ecclesiological relationship in the history of Korea."[176] Therefore, the attempt by Korean Protestant historians to incorporate the history of Catholicism in their history of Protestantism can only be limited to presenting it as a pre-historical event. They are successful in narrating an integrated history of Catholicism and Protestantism "up to the point when Protestant missions began in earnest or the limited contacts during the years immediately following. All of the historians fail to consistently incorporate the historical experiences of the two throughout their narratives."[177] Additionally, the attempt to situate the history of Catholicism in Korea as a pre-historical event in the history of Protestantism is simply "an attempt to imitate the western histories of Christianity where the historical experience of Catholicism precedes that of Protestantism."[178] He further regards that it is a mistake in that it "tends to confuse mission history with

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[175] *Ibid.*, p.xi.

[176] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.26-7.

[177] *Ibid.*, p.27.

[178] *Ibid.*

Church history by attempting to link the Mission History of Catholicism with the Church History of Protestantism."[179]

The sharp distinction that Kim advocates between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is a reflection of his particular ecclesiology which embodies a specific preference for his theological persuasion, the Reformed tradition, with a militantly anti-Roman bias. However, the logic he advances in arguing for a segregated historical experience of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Korea does not properly reflect the religious context of Korea, either historically or in the present day. Although he is correct in asserting that the two were introduced into Korea as wholly separate religious entities, this cannot be used as a basis for arguing for total ecclesiological discontinuity, such an argument being possible only if one were dealing solely with the theological doctrine of the Church. However, if one is attempting to deal with the historical experiences of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Christian Church in Korea it becomes an entirely different matter, because history is not simply a narrative of the ecclesiological institution, but of the lived experiences of people. "Historians deal without exception ... with human remnants and human artefacts."[180] As a result, even the most institutionally oriented historical study of the Church inadvertently deals with "the fragmentary remains of individuals and movements."[181] If one is attempting to present a history of the Doctrine of the Church as it developed in Korea, then the argument for a segregated history could hold some merit. However, even in this instance it would require that the historian approach this issue with "a more thorough, less biased, approach to investigation" so that it does not result in idealising one at the expense of the other.[182] Furthermore, a historian or theologian attempting to write on a given subject would do well to conduct his or her studies in light of the present context in which academics work, in the full awareness of the connections between different Christian traditions. For example, it has been wisely noted that "a Protestant author cannot write today about the history of the doctrine of justification without consulting what is being said by Catholic and Orthodox scholars both in relation to

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[179] *Ibid.*, p.27.

[180] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History*, p.35.

[181] *Ibid.*, p.37.

[182] *Ibid.*, p.25.

history and among themselves."[183] Attempting to adhere to a strict division of traditions within Christianity reflect past attitudes of militant opposition and are, therefore, ill equipped to properly reflect the realities of today. "The ecclesiastical and social contexts in which we work demand an empathetic, sensitive study of other traditions."[184]

Another point which needs to be mentioned is the manner in which he attempts to separate "Church history" from "Mission history." Attempting such a description overlooks the fact that "Church history" is "the broadest of all the traditional disciplines dealing with the church's past."[185] "Church history" includes "the practice of the church as well as the thought ... both dogma and the intersection of the church with society and the larger world"[186] within its scope of inquiry. In addition, it also includes the various issues relating to "the liturgy of the church, its sacraments and polity... homiletics and church architecture and music."[187] In short, "Church history" is relevant to "anything that the church does in the world," even "such matters as the mission and expansion of the church."[188] As for his argument that the practice of Protestant Korean historians placing the historical narrative of Roman Catholicism before that of Protestantism reflects a western practice, it appears more to be the reflection of a chronological approach to historical narrative than an imitation of western practices.

From the analysis of the so-called evangelical historiography that Kim attempts to advocate it would appear that his particular approach to and method of conducting a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea reflects what could be referred to as a pre-modern stance toward historical writing. A characteristic of such an approach is that it "exists in order to illustrate the truth of propositions known to be true before the study of the past begins."[189] In Kim's case, his particular historical investigation exists to prove his particular ecclesiology. As such, this historiography attempts merely to "illustrate how similar all of the past is to the present and how

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[183] *Ibid.*, p25.

[184] *Ibid.*

[185] *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

[186] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[187] *Ibid.*

[188] *Ibid.*

[189] Mark A. Noll, "The Potential of Missiology for the Crises of History," p.113.

clearly the past reveals the inevitable emergence of those present conditions"[190] which serves to legitimise the historian's ecclesiology.

In essence, this historiography is utterly partisan in its approach to history. It identifies an ecclesiology limited to a particular tradition with Protestant orthodoxy. However, in doing so it fails to recognise "the catholic heritage of the church" in which that tradition was shaped and of which it is a part.[191] It also fails to recognise the important distinctions "between Tradition as that which God intends to have handed on in the life of the Church, tradition as the process by which this handing on takes place and traditions as particular expressions of Christian life and thought."[192] Therefore, the historical narrative that it presents is not only limited in scope but is in danger of separating the particular "expression of Christian life and thought" from the "process by which this handing on takes place" in the realm of historical experience. When specifically applied to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea, it can be criticised as contributing "to the neglect of important components of Christian faith and practice" within the Church of Christ in Korea.[193] By attempting to categorise the various traditions of Protestant Christianity that were introduced into Korea with his own tradition as the yardstick, he utilises "a lowest common denominator form of Christianity, advocated by a specific group," thereby devaluing them.[194] This results in a theologically impoverished history of Protestant Christianity which fails to adequately describe or interpret the historical experiences of any tradition, let alone the traditions of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

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[190] *Ibid.*, p.114.

[191] David G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Volume One: God, Authority, and Salvation* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), p.9.

[192] World Council of Churches, *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels – An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics*, Faith and Order Paper No. 182 (Geneva: WCC, 1998), Paragraph 18, p.16.

[193] D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism – Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), p.38.

[194] *Ibid.*

## 5. Park Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Christian Church in Korea)

Despite the evident dangers of imposing a theological constraint on historiography, the attempt to introduce a theological perspective and methodology into the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea continues in Park, Yong-gyu and his two volume *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* (A History of the Korean Christian Church). Park trained at the Chongshin University in Seoul, receiving his M.Div. and later being ordained into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapdong). He underwent further training at the Western Evangelical Seminary in Portland, Oregon and obtained his doctorate from the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago.

Park's study of Protestant Christianity in Korea tends to focus on the historical experiences of the Presbyterian tradition but also expands to include what can broadly be referred to as evangelicalism. A sampling of his publications include *Korean Presbyterianism and Biblical Authority: The Role of Scripture in the Shaping of Korean Presbyterianism (1918-1953)*, which was his doctoral thesis, *History of Korean Presbyterian Thought* (1995), *The Life and Thought of Jugsan Park, Hyeong-yong* (1996) and *The Evangelical Movement which Awakened the Korean Church* (1998). He has also translated several publications, such as *The Korean Church and the Nevius Methods* by Charles Allen Clark, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* originally written by George Marsden, and *Renewing Your Mind in a Secular World* edited by John D. Woodbridge.

The theological position that Park utilises in developing his particular historiography is the broad concept of evangelicalism. Although his historiography begins from a particular theological position, it differs from the historiography of Kim in that, rather than attempting to identify a particular ecclesiological position as the basis of his theological historiography, he centres it round the more general concept of what he refers to as an "evangelical" theology. Park contends that the previous historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea lack a theological and Biblical perspective. As such, an evangelical perspective, which Park argues is based on the Gospel, is necessary in order to engage in a holistic interpretation of the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. According to Park, an evangelical interpretation of history "sufficiently reflects the traditions of all the main Protestant

churches in Korea while simultaneously maintaining the true purpose of the Church as the evaluative criterion of Korean Church history." The three-fold purpose of the Church which functions as this criterion is "the propagation of the Gospel, the struggle to maintain the purity of the Gospel and the social responsibility of the Gospel."[195]

Park argues that the evangelical perspective is appropriate for interpreting the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea because "the missionaries, regardless of their denominational backgrounds, possessed a self-awareness of themselves as evangelicals."[196] The self-identity of the missionaries as evangelicals was "passed on to the Korean Church through the theological education curriculum of the seminaries they erected for the training of the Korean Protestant leaders, such as the Pyongyang Presbyterian Seminary and the Hyupseong Seminary (Methodist), as well as through the various activities undertaken by the missions."[197] It was the inheritance of this evangelical identity that allowed

> the Gospel to form a distinct axis in the historical experience of the Korean Protestant Church. From the moment missionaries began their activities in Korea the propagation of the Gospel, the struggle to maintain the purity of the Gospel and the social-cultural-national responsibility of the Gospel have been important milestones in understanding the Korean Protestant Church.[198]

In order to better highlight this evangelical tradition in the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea, Park attempts to "cherish the traditional faith and theology that the Korean Church received from the missionaries"[199] in his historical narrative. The "tradition of faith received from the earliest missionaries"[200] is the crucial criterion by which adherence to an orthodox evangelical tradition is measured.

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[195] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.54.

[196] *Ibid.*, p.5.

[197] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[198] *Ibid.*

[199] *Ibid.*

[200] *Ibid.*, p.65.

Despite his emphasis on the evangelical tradition within the Korean Church, Park contends that he has tried not to neglect "the epochal background, circumstances and relevant environment in which the Church was situated."[201] The five historical events that he regards as having a close connection with the Korean Protestant Church are the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the occupation of Korea by Japan, the division of North and South Korea in 1945 and the Korean War."[202] How he relates these various historical events with the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea will be further investigated in the following chapter.

In critically analysing this so-called evangelical historiography it is important to ascertain the meaning of the term "evangelical" as used by Park. This is because "the language we use when we write history has a history of its own, a bundle of connotations we have to be aware of."[203] Failing to account for the historicity of the central term on which this particular historiography rests would lead to an inadequate analysis. Additionally, attempting to properly define the term "evangelical" is important because, contrary to what he may wish to argue, "it (i.e. evangelical) remains an elusive concept that has rarely been used with any precision."[204]

In engaging in an attempt to critically analyse Park's historiography we need to bear in mind two important distinctions relating to the term "evangelical." The first is that "for Protestants at the turn of the twentieth century, to be part of mainline Protestantism was to be evangelical."[205] That being said, we also need to be aware of the fact that "the use of the word evangelical began to change in the aftermath of the fundamentalist controversy. In the 1940s, specifically, the word began to be used exclusively by Protestants on the non-liberal side of the 1920s debates." [206] Additionally, we need to be aware of the fact that the historical phenomena of evangelicalism was a movement "that emerged in all Protestant denominations in the

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[201] *Ibid.*

[202] *Ibid.*, p.7.

[203] G. Marcille Frederick, "Doing Justice in History: Using Narrative Frames Responsibly" in Ronald A. Wells ed., *History and the Christian Historian*, p.226.

[204] Edith L. Blumhofer and Joel A. Carpenter, *Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism – A Guide to the Sources* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), p.ix.

[205] D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, p.21.

[206] *Ibid.*, p.23.

English-speaking world."[207] Therefore, the term itself is neither devoid of historical baggage nor free from the temptation to subjectively appropriate particular aspects of its historical development for the advancement of one's particular theological or ideological orientations.

With regard to Korean Protestant Christian historiography, the term 'evangelical' could be incorporated in studying the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea on the basis of two related presuppositions. The first is that "American missionaries entered Korea before any other missionary group and eventually became one of the most influential foreigners in Korea." [208] The second presupposition, interlinked with this, is that "nearly all of the American missionaries who came to Korea belonged to the mainstream denominations" and therefore considered themselves as possessing an evangelical background.[209]

However, in applying these two presuppositions in developing a particular historiography of Protestant Christianity in Korea, we need to bear in mind that these presuppositions are chronologically limited. This is because although the earliest American missionaries to Korea can be considered to have possessed a common identity as evangelicals due to the general background from which they came, this common denominator soon evaporated as the theological controversies of the 1920s divided opinions even among missionaries from the same denominations. Therefore, it is inappropriate to apply the concept of evangelical to all the missionaries who served in Korea. This is because each missionary would have formulated his or her self-identity as an evangelical in a substantially different manner and, according to their theological orientation, would have possessed different understandings of the term. As such, the development of an evangelical consciousness within the historical experiences of Protestantism in Korea, especially in relation to the influence of the missionaries from the United States, can be regarded as having been a dynamic movement with many interlacing parts and interacting players. In this respect we would do well to remember the words of Mark A. Noll who declared that

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[207] Ronald A. Wells, "Decoding Conflicted History: Religion and Historiography on Northern Ireland" in Ronald A. Wells ed., *History and the Christian Historian*, p.192.

[208] Ryu, Dae-young, *Early American Missionaries in Korea (1884-1910): Understanding Missionaries from their Middle-Class Background* (Seoul: Institute for Korean Church History Studies, 2001), p.27.

[209] *Ibid.*, p.27

"'Evangelicalism' is not, and never has been, an '-ism' like other Christian isms – for example, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, or even Pentecostalism."[210] Therefore, it could be argued that presupposing a definitive concept of the term 'evangelical' as providing the theoretical basis for a particular historiography of Protestant Christianity in Korea can lead to a problematic depiction and interpretation of its historical experiences. Attempting to build a particular Korean Protestant Christian historiography on the basis of a narrow concept of evangelicalism that suits the theological position of the historian would not only distort the rich mosaic of evangelicalism itself but also jeopardise the diversity of expressions and theological emphases of the various 'evangelical' denominations in Korea. By positing evangelicalism as "a lowest common denominator form of Christianity" the "evangelical historiography" runs the risk of neglecting "important components of Christian faith and practice, even among those believers who claim to be evangelical."[211]

On another related note, in order to trace the historicity of the evangelical heritage that was passed on from the missionaries to Korean Protestant Christianity, Park emphasises the theological education that was conducted by the missionaries. More specifically, he refers to two theological centres of education, the Pyongyang Presbyterian Seminary and the Hyupseong Seminary. The first, as the name clearly depicts, was the theological training centre for the Presbyterian missions. The second was the theological training institution for the Methodist missions in Korea.

It can be accepted, to a certain extent, that these two institutions were crucial in handing on the evangelical heritage from the missionaries to their Korean converts by virtue of the missionaries being the teachers. Whether these institutions were the primary conduit through which the 'evangelical heritage' of the missionaries was passed on to Korean Protestant Christianity is a moot point. The problem, it seems, is twofold.

In the first instance, these theological institutions were primarily utilised for the training of Korean clergy by the Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries. However, if the historian regards these two theological institutions as being the only, or even

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[210] Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), p.8.

[211] D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, p.38.

the primary, channels through which the so-called evangelical heritage was conveyed, then this would limit the inheritors to those Presbyterians and Methodists attending these institutions and exclude those from other denominational backgrounds who trained elsewhere. This would severely limit the degree to which the term 'evangelical' can be utilised in describing Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Secondly, positioning the two theological institutions as the main conduits of the so-called evangelical heritage seems to assume that the curricula of these two institutions maintained a degree of uniformity over a sustained period of time. It would also assume that the influence of the training that the Korean Protestant Christians received from these institutions was so pervasive that it withstood any external theological or ideological challenges, and that any changes in faculty was conducted in such a way as to preserve the passing on of this heritage without disruption or distortion.

However, when we look at the historical development of these two institutions we discover that they underwent substantial changes over the years. Therefore, the presumption by the historian that an evangelical consensus existed among the missionaries who served as the teachers in the two institutions and which influenced the content of their teaching is limited to the earliest periods of either institution. In addition, this simplistic generalisation also conveniently overlooks the fact that even from their inception the two theological institutions exhibited their respective denominational characteristics in which the understanding of 'evangelical' developed quite differently. It also neglects the fact that different individual missionaries would have held different opinions and theological positions given that these institutions were collaborative efforts by four different Presbyterian denominations and two Methodist denominations, respectively.

Furthermore, by locating the evangelical heritage within the educational institutions established and operated by the missionaries, Park's historiography limits the possible subjects of inquiry to those who were direct beneficiaries of their curriculum. As such, it limits the scope of historical investigation primarily to the clergy and leadership of the particular denominations represented by the two institutions. While such an investigation can depict the process by which the so-called evangelical heritage was passed on from the missionary leadership to the Korean leadership, it cannot depict the general characteristic of Korean Protestantism unless evidence is presented of the wider acceptance of this heritage.

In addition, by identifying the tradition of faith with the so-called evangelical heritage presumably inherited from the missionaries, Park's historiography, once again, places the spotlight of historical inquiry on the missionaries and their activities. Consequently, although the historical narrative may refer to the Korean Protestant Christian historical experience, it is only in relation to the role and function of the missionary. This results in a historical narrative which subsumes the Korean Protestant historical experience under that of the missionaries. As such, it presents a historical interpretation of Protestant Christianity in Korea which depicts a hierarchical transmission of the tradition of faith from missionary to Korean clergy as the normative embodiment of Protestant orthodoxy.

In the end, the evangelical historiography espoused by Park is constrained by the limitations of its basic conceptions of evangelical and evangelicalism to an elitist and heroic narrative of history regarding Protestant Christianity in Korea. In this respect, the overall perception of Protestant Christianity's historical experience in Korea, yet again, reflects a Whig interpretation of history, focusing almost exclusively on the success stories of key individuals and the triumph of a particularly formulated perception of Protestant orthodoxy.

Overall, Park's evangelical historiography fails to appropriately account for the historical evolution of the term evangelical. As such, it does not adequately address the possible danger of the historian using a contemporary connotation to interpret historical events and experiences in which the application of the term in that sense may be inappropriate and lead to a misinterpretation of the events in question. Furthermore, by failing to appropriately account for the differing connotations of the term the historian cannot demonstrate how the term can be uniformly and consistently applied in relation to the historiography.

## Conclusion

In order to justify their contributions to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea, each historian that we have analysed in this chapter attempts to present a logical argument in support of his particular historiography, showing where the previous historiographies have inadequately dealt with the historical experiences

of Protestant Christianity in Korea. At the same time the historians all attempt to convince the reader that their particular historiography can contribute to a better and more holistic understanding of the historical experiences of Protestantism in Korea.

However, our comparative and critical analysis of all five historiographies unveils a crucially important issue in the arguments as they have been advanced by the five Korean Protestant historians. This has to do with the way in which the historians develop their particular historiographies in relation to others. It is interesting to note that the five historians all seem to regard their particular historiography as following on from their predecessors'. Each historian is quite clear whom he regards as his predecessor and whose particular historiography he is trying to correct. In this sense, we can say that the five Korean Protestant historians seem to regard their historiographical developments as occurring along a linear chronological genealogy.

This placing of each historian leads each to shape the argument for their particular historiography as an attempt to overcome what they regard as a particular deficiency within the preceding historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The argument is presented in such a way that their particular historiography is considered as simply remedying the perceived failings of the predecessors. In other words, the historians tend to regard their historiographies as building upon the work of the preceding historian providing a methodological supplement and addendum to an already existing historical narrative. Therefore, the Korean Protestant historians do not regard their responsibility in developing a particular historiography as supplanting this pre-existing narrative or even presenting an alternative, but rather as simply presenting a perspective and method of historical study which can better elucidate it.

Consequently, the development of their particular historiographies does not serve to present an authentic alternative approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Neither does it attempt to present a radically different perspective with which to describe and interpret the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Contrary to expectations, the arguments that the historians advance for their particular historiography merely buttress the existing perspective and methodology, with a slight modification in order to supply what the particular historian regards as lacking from the historical narrative. As a result, the five different historiographies are five slightly differing versions of an identical

'traditionalised' narrative, rather than five uniquely different descriptions and interpretations of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Consequently, they become habitual repetitions of the dominant narrative rather than presenting authentic research that illustrates an alternative reading and interpretation of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The manner in which this common attitude shared by the Korean Protestant historians influences the content of their histories will be taken up in subsequent chapters.

In closing this chapter we must note the manner in which the Korean Protestant historians disregard the relation of Protestant Christian historiography to the theoretical developments in Korean historiography, and how it influenced their histories. We noted, previously, the manner in which three of the five historians had failed to acknowledge the influences of the nationalistic historiography upon their own historiographies. However, the influences of the nationalistic historiography can actually be seen in all five of the historiographies developed by the Korean Protestant historians. We will consider how the influences of the nationalistic historiography impinge upon the histories by the Korean Protestant historians in the next chapter. However, at this point we will simply note that all five of the histories focus on the pre-1945 period. This is because it is the single epoch in which the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea can best be conjoined with the interests of the nationalistic historiography in a manner which highlights the positive contributions of Protestant Christianity to the nation building project against colonialism.

Alongside the nationalistic historiography the influences of historical materialism linked to the Marxist-Socialist movements in Korea in the 1920s and 30s, and positivism, as both developed within the wider academic discipline of Korean historical studies, also influenced the five Korean Protestant historians, though they do not acknowledge such external influences. For example, the Korean Protestant historians have taken on some of the arguments advocated by their secular counterparts who sought to apply the perspectives of historical materialism. However, unlike their secular counterparts the Korean Protestant historians are not interested in the ways in which the social existence of the Koreans changed with the development of socio-economic production methods. As such, they are not much interested in how Korea apparently came to develop from a 'primitive society' to a 'feudal society' in their histories. Nor are they interested in the development of

socio-economic classes in Korean society according to the ownership and control of economic production. Nevertheless, the Korean Protestant historians unwittingly borrow from their secular counterparts in advancing their descriptions and interpretations of how Protestant Christianity contributed to the modernisation project of Korea during the late 19th and early 20th century and ultimately became the primary force in nation building during this critical period. Within the 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea set forth by the five Korean Protestant historians Protestant Christianity is presented as the tool which enabled the Korean people to break away from their pre-modern social existence to a modern one. As such, Protestant Christianity is described and interpreted as the single dominant force which brought about the modern transformation of Korea. This mimics the ideals of progress and self-motivation for development advanced by the Korean historians who had advocated the methodology of historical materialism in the face of imperialist historiography.

Perhaps a less obvious but rather stronger influence is that of historical positivism which seeks to apply a scientific and positivist methodology to the study of Korean history. As was noted above, one of the characteristics that differentiated the five Korean Protestant historians from the other individuals who had undertaken a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea was their supposed professionalism. This professionalism was regarded as reflecting the training that each had received through various institutions of higher education which taught them the tools of Western historical methodologies. Korean Protestant historians regarded the possession of such tools as providing them with a scientific and objective perspective with which to study the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Unfortunately, this sense of professionalism seems to have fostered an elitist attitude amongst the Korean Protestant historians. Not only do they trivialise the historical studies of those individuals whom they regard as lacking such professional credentials, but their histories foster a depiction of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a religion of the elite and enlightened. In this respect, the scientific and objective characteristic of the Korean Protestant historians do not serve to enlarge the scope of historical inquiry but rather embolden the perception of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a privileged religion.

In many ways, unbeknownst to the Korean Protestant historians, the various influences that affect and inform their historiographies serve to accentuate the

limitations of these historiographies by truncating their histories into the narrative of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative. Not only are the justifications that the Korean Protestant historians present for their historiographies subsumed under the influences of nationalistic historiography and the perspectives and methods of historical materialism and positivism, but the very content of the histories conform to the dominant narrative of the 'traditionalised' history that replicates and solidifies a monolithic identity of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It is with this in mind that we turn our attention to the actual format and content of the five histories concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians.

# Chapter 3 - A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the Structure, Contents, and Bibliographical Sources Utilised by the Korean Protestant Historians in their Historical Studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea

## Introduction

The previous chapters set out the particular context in which the five histories by the Korean Protestant historians presently being analysed in this thesis were written. The review of both the manner and context in which Korean Protestant Christian historiography developed led us to identify the pervading influence of a dominant narrative, which we had termed the 'traditionalised' historical narrative, concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea. We saw how this dominant narrative was influenced by the various historiographical developments that occurred in the wider general field of historical studies on Korea. We also noted how the lack of contextual awareness by the Korean Protestant historians concerning these influences perpetuated an uncritical replication of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative, which functions as an overbearing narrative subsuming all historiographical perspectives and methodologies and thereby negating any positive and creative contributions that may arise from an authentic application of new historiographies. As a result, the five historiographies proposed by the Korean Protestant historians fail to present a credible history that can be regarded as either new or different from their predecessors'. Rather, their function is reduced to simply replicating the 'traditionalised' historical narrative which serves to further perpetuate and solidify the legitimation of a particular self-aggrandising identity of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In short, the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians results in a replication of hagiography.

Building upon these observations, this chapter will seek to capture the manner in which the dominance of the "traditional" historical narrative is reflected in the actual writing of history by Korean Protestant historians. This will be done by critically and comparatively analysing the way in which the individual histories are structured as well as the contents of their narratives. Through this comparative and critical

analysis of the actual histories we will attempt to uncover common characteristics within each of the histories that reflect the pervading influence of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative. This will allow us to determine the manner in which this dominant narrative obfuscates the purportedly different historiographical positions of the five Korean Protestant historians into a habitual repetition of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative.

## 1. Critical and Comparative Analysis of Structure

Perhaps the most convenient way to begin our comparative and critical analysis of the structures of the five histories is by reviewing how the individual historians organise their histories. This can be achieved by analysing each history's Table of Contents. A cursory review of the five histories and their Table of Contents clearly reveals a common characteristic: a chronological approach to the subject. For example, Paik divides his history into eight chapters with each chapter covering the following periods: Introductory chapter covering the anthropological background of Korea and justification of study, Chapter 1 – Early Contact with Christianity, Chapter 2 – 1876~1884, Chapter 3 – 1885~1890, Chapter 4 – 1891~1897, Chapter 5 – 1897~1906, Chapter 6 – 1907~1910 and Chapter 7 – Conclusion.

Min structures his history in a slightly different manner. However, he maintains the chronological approach and divides his history into three large parts with Part One covering the historical experiences of Korea's contact with western ideas and forms of Christianity before the arrival of Roman Catholicism during the 17$^{th}$ century. Part Two focuses on the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in Korea from the 17$^{th}$ to late 19$^{th}$ century when Protestantism arrived in Korea. Part Three, by far the largest of the three, deals with the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea up to the early 1970s. Within Part Three, Min describes and interprets various events using a combination of thematic and chronological approaches and structures these into individual chapters and subheadings within chapters. His methodology appears to utilise a chronological approach to present the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, interspersing particular thematic developments within the chronological narrative, in order to highlight a particular

event or individual that he regards as reflecting his perception of the historical experience of the Korean National Church.

The history of the Institute also incorporates a chronological and thematic division of the history of Christianity in Korea. A unique concept that is employed solely by the Institute is that of 'transmission' and 'appropriation.' These two terms reflect the Institute's particular perspective in evaluating the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Korea. According to the Institute, Roman Catholicism was 'transmitted' to the Koreans while Protestantism was 'appropriated.' In other words, according to the Institute, the Korean people were passive in how Roman Catholicism was received and established in Korea. In contrast, the Institute regards the Korean attitude toward Protestant Christianity to have been more pro-active in its reception and establishment within Korea. Unfortunately, as we shall see in the following critical analysis of the contents, the Institute fails to adequately support the application of such terms with sufficient historical evidence.

Returning to our analysis of the Table of Contents as it is structured by the Institute we can see that they divide the historical experiences of Christianity in Korea in a chronological manner under the two broad terms of 'transmission' and 'appropriation' in the first volume of their two volume history. Part One is entitled "Transmission" and comprises three chapters: Chapter 1 – Christianity's Eastern Transmission: 7$^{th}$ Century ~ 1593, Chapter 2 – Transmission of Roman Catholicism: 1894~1800 and Chapter 3 – Suffering and Growth of Roman Catholicism: 1801~1875. Part Two is also composed of three chapters and presented under the title "Appropriation": Chapter 4 – Appropriation of Protestantism: 1876~1884, Chapter 5 – Freedom of Propagation and Early Missionary Activities: 1885~1906 and Chapter 6 – Growth of the Church and Protestant Nationalist Movements: 1907~1918.

The second volume incorporates a chronological and thematic division of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It comprises three chapters which are arranged under the heading "Persecution": Chapter 7 – The March First Independence Movement and Protestant Christianity, Chapter 8 – Re-assessing the Church in a Period of Transition, Chapter 9 – Persecution Under the Japanese and the Struggle of Protestantism. Although particular time frames are not explicitly presented in the titles of each chapter the contents reveal that each chapter deals with

events occurring during the period from 1919 to the mid 1920s, the mid 1920s to the mid 1930s and the mid 1930s to 1945, respectively.

Constructing a Table of Contents in which the period covered by a particular chapter is not explicitly detailed despite the history containing a chronological investigation of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea is also found in the history written by Kim, Young-jae. His history comprises a total of ten chapters which are labelled with what, at first glance, appear to be thematic headings. However, a closer analysis of the contents reveals that the entire format follows a chronological pattern, except for the first chapter which deals with issues of methodology and a review of previous studies on the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. From the second chapter onwards Kim's history is nearly identical with those of the previous histories as the following titles of each chapter clearly reveals: Chapter 2 – Christianity in Korea and Nestorianism, Chapter 3 – Roman Catholic Missions and Romanism in Korea, Chapter 4 – The Beginnings of Protestant Mission in Korea, Chapter 5 – The Establishment of Protestant Christianity in Korea, Chapter 6 – The Growth of Protestant Christianity in Korea, Chapter 7 – The Suffering of the Korean Church During the 1930s, Chapter 8 – Liberation and the Korean Church after 1945, Chapter 9 – The Korean Church After 1960 and Chapter 10 – The Korean Church Today and Tomorrow.

The length of a history seemingly does not affect the Table of Contents adopting a similar format to those followed by previous histories, as we can see in the history by Park, Yong-gyu. His two volume history runs to a total of more than two thousand pages, excluding appendices. Of the two volumes the first volume covers the period from the 13$^{th}$ century to 1910. It is divided into four parts, Part One containing the narrative of early contacts with western religions, i.e. Nestorianism, by Koreans and also containing a brief historical review of Roman Catholicism in Korea. Part Two detail the sporadic missionary activities that touched Korea before the establishment of Protestant missions in Korea (1832~1884). Part Three details the arrival and subsequent establishment of Protestant missions and the growth of Protestant Christianity in Korea (1885~1900) and Part Four deals with the revival movements within Protestant Christianity in Korea (1900~1910).

The second volume also comprises four parts. Part One narrates the historical experiences of the Korean Church as it organised its institutional structures while Part Two examines the relationship between Protestant Christian mission activities

and the nationalist movement. Part Three details the various changes and challenges that Protestant Christianity faced during the 1930s and Part Four describes the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity from Korea's liberation in 1945 to the 1960s. An interesting point to be noted is that both the history by Park and the Institute, which are divided into two volumes with each volume covering similar periods, do not explicitly detail the periods that are covered in the second volume of their histories. At first glance it seems as if the second volume approaches the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea from a thematic perspective. Yet, a closer analysis of the format in which the chapters are arranged and their contents reveals an implicitly chronological rather than thematic structure.

## 2. Critical and Comparative Analysis of Contents

The above review of the Table of Contents through which the Korean Protestant historian structures his historical narrative clearly reveals several common characteristics. Most prominent is the fact that each history contains at least one chapter which deals with a review of the historical context into which Protestant Christianity arrived in Korea. Although the length and degree of detail differs from historian to historian this review of the historical context contains reference to the social, cultural, political and religious context of Korea during the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries. Although such an appreciation of the wider context in which Protestant Christianity arrived and established itself in Korea is laudable we must, nonetheless, critically appraise its position in the wider structure of the entire historical narrative. This is because the Korean Protestant historians present the environmental context as a basis for unfolding near identical depictions and interpretations of the Protestant Christian historical experience which uncritically mirrors the hermeneutical perspectives of an imperial and Orientalist historiography.

In the eyes of the Korean Protestant historians Korea, in the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries, existed in a religious vacuum. The observation made by Paik that "when Christianity entered the land, all ancient faiths were in a state of decay. There

was no one distinct and controlling religion"[212] is regarded as a factual description of the contemporary context. This perception was received and elaborated upon without critical examination by subsequent historians.[213] According to the Korean Protestant historians this religious vacuum portrayed the religious hunger of the Korean people for a religion which could satisfy their spiritual desires. In addition, the social and political decay of Korea during this period is regarded as resulting from the religious disenfranchisement of Korean society.

In the view of the Korean Protestant historians, the religiously dysfunctional society of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had lost the very resources which would have allowed it to renew itself. Therefore, the degenerate, demoralised and dysfunctional state of Korean society was merely a reflection of the fact that the country and people were "in dire need of progressive, wholesome, and energetic spirit of life."[214] In many respects the main purpose of the "reviews" of the historical context conducted by the Korean Protestant historian is primarily to present the reader with a description of the deprived and destitute condition of Korea prior to the arrival of Protestant Christianity. Such a description serves to further accentuate and highlight the positive contributions of Protestant Christianity as it was reflected in the arrival of Protestant missionaries and their Western, enlightening influences.

It is also worthwhile to note the fact that the review of the historical context conducted by the Korean Protestant historians also incorporates a particular perception of religion. To a certain extent this particular perception can be regarded as reflecting the specific historical experience of religion shared by the Korean people, an experience which views the role of religion as being more than simply the satisfaction of spiritual desires and quests for a better after-life. For the Korean people, as for many others, religion is instrumental in preserving peace and order in everyday life. In this respect, religion, for the Korean people, is "a component of Korean culture which has grown and developed through time."[215] As such, the role

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[212] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea,* p.19, 27.

[213] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.227; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa*, p.143; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.132-3; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.270.

[214] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.13.

[215] James Huntley Grayson, *Korea – A Religious History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002, Revised Edition), p.2.

of religion extends to the shaping and development of a culture which can sustain and preserve social integrity.

In this sense, highlighting the traditional religions of Korea as having been totally dysfunctional not only serves to augment the argument for Protestant Christianity's functioning as a religious alternative but also implies that the introduction of Protestant Christianity was the stimulus for a cultural transformation of Korea. The introduction and establishment of Protestant Christianity as a positive religious and cultural stimulus in Korean society is thus presented in a manner which highlights how it was instrumental in bringing the people of Korea out of their spiritual and cultural backwardness to a state of enlightenment. It is further narrated in a manner which exemplifies the contributions of the various philanthropic institutions that were established by the Protestant missionaries. Not only is Protestant Christianity exalted for bringing salvation for the individual Korean, it is also extolled for having provided the source of national pride and social cohesion which precipitated the growth of democracy and nationalism in Korea.

However, the review of the historical context, as it is conducted by the Korean Protestant historian, contains several contentious points. The first is that their reviews of the historical context overly simplify the religious context of Korean society, not only during the late 19th and early 20th centuries but also in subsequent periods. The suggestion that the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a religious vacuum conveniently overlooks the fact that other religions existed in Korea.

It can be conceded as being factually correct that the religious context when Protestant Christianity was introduced to Korea was one in which the various traditional religions were weak. However, this does not automatically imply that these religions disappeared immediately with the arrival of Protestant Christianity or became extinct in subsequent years. Nor can it be plausibly argued that their influence on the Korean people evaporated over time to be wholly supplanted by Protestant Christianity. As one scholar of religions in Korea observed, the historical experience of religion in Korea has been that of "a connected history."[216] Therefore, while there have been periods in the history of Korea where one particular religion or another functioned as a dominant religion, it must constantly be borne in mind that

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[216] *Ibid.*, p.xv.

this dominant exertion of influence existed within a religiously plural context.[217] The continued existence and growth of the traditional religions of Korea, Buddhism and Confucianism, as well as the rise of new religious movements, such as *Chundogyo*, *Jeung San Do* and *Daejongyo*, during the 20th centuries also provides evidence to the fact that Korea is, and historically has been, a religiously plural society.

Therefore, a review of the religious context into which Protestant Christianity was introduced that overlooks the continued existence and influence of other religions fails to adequately take into consideration the possibility of the influences of and interaction with other religions which may have contributed to the historical reception of Protestant Christianity as a legitimate and valid religion by the Korean people. In this respect, it is important for the Korean Protestant historian to make a conscientious effort to not only recognise the religiously plural context of present day Korea, but the historical reality of Korea's religious plurality in order to properly describe and interpret the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

The second point of contention with regard to the reviews of the historical context as presented by the Korean Protestant historians is that their depiction of the social and political context of late 19th and early 20th century Korea supports, indeed replicates, imperial historiography. While it can be conceded that the various works undertaken by the Protestant missionaries contributed in marked ways to the modern enlightenment of Korea recognition of this contribution must be balanced with an acknowledgement of the fact that they alone were not the sole social, cultural, and political forces operational in Korean society during this period which contributed to the modern enlightenment of Korea and her people.

Contrary to the Korean Protestant historians' perception of the Korean political institution of the time the Korean government, in many significant and important ways, had initiated measures to reform Korean society and modernise its social and political structures.[218] The fact that many of these measures were unsuccessful could be regarded as reflecting the lack of competence on the part of Korean officialdom. However, it can also be interpreted as reflecting the particular context of the period, particularly the various competing international powers who held conflicting

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[217] *Ibid.*, pp.230-1.

[218] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, translated by Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Iljogag, 1984), pp.267-71.

interests in Korea and the competitive environment influenced by various domestic groups related to them. Therefore, a simplistic comparison of the success of the missions and the failure of Korean bureaucracy is merely that: simplistic.

The success of the Missions can be attributed to a variety of factors. Perhaps most important of these is the full support of the Korean court with regard to their educational and medical endeavours as well as other institutional philanthropic activities. The fact that the Korean court saw fit to grant their royal blessings upon these projects reflects the degree to which the court regarded such efforts as being beneficial to the wider interests of Korea. Furthermore, unlike the Korean bureaucratic system of the times, the missionaries were not hampered by the various international intrigues which permeated Korean officialdom during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, unlike the Korean government, the missionaries had substantial financial resources at their disposal to support their work.

Another important element which must be taken into consideration in order to develop a full understanding of Korean society during this period is the existence of immigrant communities. By the 1890s there were large concentrations of Japanese and Chinese merchants residing in the various treaty ports spread throughout Korea. The signing of treaties with various Western countries during this period and the awarding of concessions to entrepreneurs from outside Korea to develop mines, build railroads and develop the social infrastructure of the country meant that many Koreans had increased opportunities to engage with foreign influence. Although their treaty rights limited their sphere of operation to the areas around the ports, many foreigners disregarded the regulations and ventured further into the interior in pursuit of economic gains.[219] Therefore, many Koreans who resided outside of the treaty ports also came into contact with foreigners. Such contact gradually eroded the suspicion of the Korean people, as well as opening their eyes to the material benefits of modernisation and westernisation.

Aside from the fact that the lack of appreciation of the socio-political context can lead to an overly simplified interpretation of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea, there is a more ominous danger that is little recognised by the Korean Protestant historians. The generalised deprecation of the Korean socio-political context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries inadvertently parallels the

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[219] *Ibid.*, pp.282, 295-7.

evaluation of Korean society and her people that was advanced by the Japanese in order to legitimate their colonial conquest of Korea. The perception that Korean society was utterly and irrevocably corrupt and dysfunctional was one of the strong arguments advanced by the Japanese for their self-appointed role as the agent of enlightenment for Korea. Not only Japan, but China, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and many of the western countries were in agreement that Korea lacked the strength and initiative necessary to transform itself. Therefore, in the interests of the Korean people and the stability of the region it was decided that Korea should be annexed and modernised by Japan, a country which was regarded by western nations as best suited for their purposes of maintaining unfettered access to China while simultaneously preventing the expansion of Russian influence in the region. In order to justify this colonial enterprise the Japanese utilised history to distort the past and portray their encroachment of Korea's sovereignty as having historical precedents. This was achieved through the development of an imperial historiography which developed a specific method of describing and interpreting the historical experiences of Korea so that it appeared as inferior in comparison to Japan. Therefore, while the negative and seemingly degenerate aspects of Korean society during the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries that are emphasised by the Korean Protestant historians contribute to seemingly enhance the positive modernising influences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, such a glamorised presentation of Protestant Christian historical experience is conducted in a manner which supports and strengthens the logic of imperial historiography's distortion of Korea's historical experience.

A second commonality that appears in the content of the five histories by Korean Protestant historians is their description and interpretation of the Roman Catholic historical experience in Korea. All five of the histories written by the Korean Protestant historians contain at least one chapter which deals with the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in Korea. What is interesting about these chapters is how both their content and tone are structured so as to present the historical experience of the Roman Catholics in a starkly contrasting narrative format from that of Protestant Christianity. The historical narratives detailing the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in Korea constantly focus on the persecutions and tribulations that they suffered at the hands of the Korean government. They also tend to portray the activities of the foreign missionaries and their converts as having been treasonous and incompatible with the interests of the Korean nation. In contrast, the

historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea are primarily narrated centring round the positive reception it received by the Korean people and government, its successes and triumphs in winning the hearts and souls of the Koreans and the positive contributions of its missionary activity.

This method of contrasting the historical experiences of the two major branches of Christianity in Korea tends to simplistically overlook the fact that they share important commonalities. Let us consider, for example, the argument that Protestant Christianity in Korea is historically remarkable because it was introduced by indigenous agents before the arrival of western missionaries.[220] If we look at the historical sequence of events as they unfolded in the introduction of both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism to Korea we can discover that indigenous agents were instrumental in the introduction of both traditions. However, the evidence with regard to the historical experience of Roman Catholicism far outweighs that of Protestantism in relation to the extent to which indigenous agents were responsible for introducing each branch of Christianity.

In the Roman Catholic historical experience Koreans first learnt of the religious teachings of the Roman Catholic faith by reading the various religious texts that western missionaries had translated into Chinese. This conversion experience through textual exposure led them to implement certain religious rites that they understood as expressing their new found faith. When uncertainties regarding the orthodoxy of their actions arose they sought advice from the missionaries residing in China. Under the guidance of the letters from the missionaries the Korean Catholic converts continued to refine their religious practices. In order to further enlighten themselves to the religious requirements of their new found faith, they engaged in a systematic study of the various religious texts that had been written by the missionaries. It was not until 1794 that a Roman Catholic foreign missionary arrived in Korea, a full twenty-four years after the first Korean convert had begun his religious practices according to Roman Catholic teachings and ten years after Koreans began to organise themselves along ecclesiastical lines.

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[220] This single aspect of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea is regarded as the particular experience which sets the Protestant Christian experience in Korea apart from those of any other. See L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.53-4, 79-80; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.168-72; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.152-6; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.71-2 and Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.307, 333.

In contrast, the Protestant religious experience began in 1876 when a Korean merchant agreed to work as the language teacher of John Ross, a United Presbyterian Church of Scotland missionary in Manchuria. From the beginning Protestantism, as a religion, was taught to the Koreans by western missionaries. It was through the experience of working with the missionaries and receiving teaching from them that the earliest Korean converts to Protestantism were born. Of course, this important fact does not, in any way, diminish the important role that these individuals were to play in latter years through their work as colporteurs and evangelists in other parts of Manchuria, and within Korea itself. However, it is important to note that the religious experience of conversion by the Koreans to Protestantism occurred, historically, *not* from indigenous interest but rather as a result of missionary teaching. Therefore, in terms of indigeneity in the religious experiences of faith, the Roman Catholic historical experience can be evaluated as having been more authentically indigenous than that of Protestantism.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Korean Protestant historians tend to emphasise the indigenous agency in the propagation of Protestantism among the Korean people is because of their focus on the dissemination of the Bible which was achieved by Korean colporteurs who also acted as evangelists. Indeed, the numerous Koreans who were employed by the missionaries as colporteurs played a significant role in the dissemination of religious print materials into the villages of rural Korea. However, it is difficult to assess the content of what they taught in their book selling journeys. Given that their religious conversion experience occurred after prolonged exposure to the western missionaries, and considering the fact that they returned to these same missionaries to report on their work and receive further instruction for future work, we might assume that their religious experience originated and grew from these encounters. Therefore, in the strictest sense, the religious experience of Protestantism in Korea can be regarded as not having originated from purely indigenous religious activities, but rather from missionary proselytizing activities.

Furthermore, we need to differentiate between the indigenous agency in the dissemination of religious texts, i.e. Bibles, tracts, and treatises, from that of the indigenous agency in the introduction and establishment of a religion among the people. We cannot deny, historically, that the subsequent establishment of both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, as religions in Korea, was a combination of both missionary and indigenous agents. However, if one were to attempt a historical

interpretation and narrative of the proportion that indigenous agency played during the initial period of their introduction, then one must acknowledge that the indigenous character of Roman Catholicism is, historically, stronger than that of Protestantism.

An important reason why the Korean Protestant historians fail to acknowledge the stronger element of indigenous character evident in the historical experience of Roman Catholicism in Korea may be due to the fact that they do not appropriately distinguish between western learning as it was received in Korean literati circles and the subsequent development of Roman Catholicism as a religion and object of faith. The lack of awareness of how the one, historically, became the other can lead a historical investigation to minimise the importance of the faith experience which transformed the academic exercise into religious ritual and belief.

The tendency to minimise the positive elements of the historical experience of Roman Catholicism in Korea can be interpreted as an attempt by the Korean Protestant historian to regard the two traditions of Christianity as discontinuous entities.[221] The contrasting narratives are not only due to the fact that the historian is concerned with primarily presenting a historical account of Protestant Christianity in as favourable a light as possible. Rather, they can be regarded as resulting from a religious and theological bias which is part of the Korean Protestant Christian self-understanding that regards itself as being wholly segregated and different from Korean Roman Catholicism. Therefore, the shortcomings of the Roman Catholic establishment in Korea are intended to reinforce a historically formulated perception of Protestant Christianity as the superior, if not the only proper, form of Christianity in Korea. That such a historically formulated perception of itself is central to the 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity further contributes to our critique that the purportedly different historiographies become subsumed in replicating the dominant narrative.

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[221] This tendency begins with L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.42-3 and continues in Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.111-2; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.27 and Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.224-5. A seeming exception can be found in IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.120-1. However, even the Institute eventually comes to regard the historical experiences of the two to be discontinuous and privileges the Protestant experience by referring to the Roman Catholic experiences as one of "transmission" and the Protestant experiences as one of "appropriation" thereby emphasizing the indigenous pro-active characteristic of Protestantism and minimizing that of Roman Catholicism.

That this perception is historically formulated becomes apparent in the manner in which the comparison of the two traditions of Christianity during the earliest years of introduction and establishment is conducted using incompatible criteria. This comparison also lacks an appreciation of the differences which existed within the mission policies and mission context of the two traditions. For instance, Paik faults the Roman Catholics for "their emphasis on ecclesiastical institutionalism" and because "their converts are untaught of the Scriptures."[222] This criticism is taken up by a subsequent Korean Protestant historian as a symbolic sign of how the Roman Catholics were "lacking in Biblical and evangelical faith."[223] Another Korean Protestant historian refers to the activities of the Roman Catholics as "far removed, not only from the basic principle of salvation by faith alone and the Bible, but also the original mandate of the Gospel as well as its socio-cultural responsibility."[224] Such criticism by the Korean Protestant historians attempts to utilise the criteria particular to Protestant Christianity with its emphasis on the importance of Scripture and the doctrine of salvation by faith alone in critiquing the activities of the Roman Catholics who operate under a whole different set of criteria. This attempt to taint the historical experience of Roman Catholicism while utilising a theologically biased basis leads to a subjective presentation of historical data that favours one tradition over the other.

A further contributing factor to the attitude of bias and unbalanced preference for the particular tradition in which the historian stands results from an unwillingness to concede that there is a definite historical continuity between the two traditions in Korea. It appears, rather, that the Korean Protestant historian regards the historic ecclesiastical experience of the ruptured relationship between the two traditions that occurred during the Reformation in Europe as sufficient proof of the disparity and discontinuity of the two traditions within Korea.[225] It is further interesting to note how this same historian extends this argument to suggest that because "the rupture of the two traditions by the Reformation took place in the historical experience of the Western world, not Korea" the attempt by certain Korean Protestant historians to inter-relate the historical experiences of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants in

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[222] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.42.

[223] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.111.

[224] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.225.

[225] Kim, Young Jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.62.

Korea is the result of "failing to differentiate between 'mission history' and 'church history.'"[226] According to this view, because the ecclesiology of the two are different, it is impossible to present a coherent common narrative regarding the historical experiences of the Protestant Church in Korea with that of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea. Any attempt to do so can only result in a presentation of a history of missions by both traditions. This, in turn, cannot be considered a valid history of the Korean Church as it takes the activities of the mission agencies, i.e. foreign missionaries and their agencies, as the subject of the historical narratives.

However, what this particular historian fails to recognise is that the historical experience of the rupture of the two traditions which took place in the Western world, by way of the Reformation, was not only diffused within the Korean context but was concretely experienced by the Korean converts to both traditions through the teachings, words, and attitudes of both sets of missionaries.[227] Therefore, although the Reformation itself was a historical experience limited in geography to Europe, its implications and influence were felt throughout the world where either tradition of Christianity was propagated, and especially in areas where the two competed for converts, such as Korea.

Furthermore, the effort to differentiate between a history of missions and a history of the Church in the Korean context can also be interpreted as an effort to apply Western historical experiences without properly contemplating the implications. This is because unlike the historical experiences of the Western churches, the very genesis and formulation of the Korean Church, whether Protestant or Catholic, resulted from mission activities. It is not only impossible to attempt a narrative of the Korean Church separately from a historical narrative of the missionaries, it is quite impractical. This is because the church itself is the by-product or result of accumulative efforts by the mission agencies. Therefore, attempting to segregate a history of the church from a history of mission in a missionised context, such as Korea, can be criticised as attempting to apply Western ecclesiological and historical criteria to a wholly different and incompatible context.

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[226] *Ibid.*, pp.27-8.

[227] A prime example can be found in what is called the "War of Words" that erupted between the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary groups in Korea. Refer to Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.180-4; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1., pp.235-6; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.778-82.

The attitude of the Korean Protestant historians regarding the narratives dealing with the historical experience of Roman Catholicism in Korea consistently displays a historically nuanced bias. Although individual historians do attempt to present what may be regarded as objective narratives regarding aspects of the Roman Catholic historical experience in Korea this does not stop them arriving at the identical conclusion of segregated discontinuity between the two traditions. Clearly, to the Korean Protestant historians the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism belong to the pre-modern period of Korea's religious history, as far as Protestant Christianity in Korea is concerned. As such, the role and function that the Roman Catholics played in bringing about any positive changes to Korean society serves merely as a historical backdrop against which the providential works of Protestantism mould a society thoroughly influenced and transformed by the values of Western Protestant Christianity.

This tendency of regarding other religious traditions as constituting a passive context into which Protestant Christianity entered triumphantly, while refusing to acknowledge the possibility of any influence from these traditions, permeates all five histories written by the Korean Protestant historians. Presenting the historical experiences and relatedness of the two Christian traditions in the history of Christianity in Korea as discontinuous is amplified by the desire of the Korean Protestant historians to magnify the contributory aspects of the various Protestant institutions in the modernisation process of Korea. A minimalist presentation of all other religious traditions is necessitated by the attempt of the Korean Protestant Christian historical narrative to aggrandise the positive contributions of Protestant Christianity and magnify the transformative influences of its institutional organizations.

Another reason may be due to the common perception that the Korean Protestant historians share in which they regard Protestant Christianity as the religion that fulfilled all of the religious desires and needs of the Korean people which had never been realised by any other. The assertion made by Paik, who refers to Protestant Christianity as the "universal religion which can offer all that other religions can offer – the high ethical and moral standard of Confucianism, the religious inspiration

of Buddhism, and the mysteries of life and death and of the spiritual world of Shamanism,"[228] is shared by all historians of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Despite the fact that Roman Catholicism had arrived in Korea nearly a century earlier and had, by the time of Protestant Christianity's arrival, established itself as a religion of the Korean people, within the "analytical" framework of the Korean Protestant historians Roman Catholicism did not sufficiently fulfil the religious aspirations of the Korean people. A possible explanation for this attitude of the Korean Protestants historians may be due to the strong anti-Roman sentiment which had been passed on to the Korean Protestant Christians by the early Protestant missionaries from America, which explicitly cast the "Christian-ness" of Roman Catholicism in doubt. It is interesting to note that this sentiment continues to be influential within the present Korean Protestant establishment. Within the more recent historical studies of Christianity in Korea, such as those by the Institute, Kim, Young-jae and Park, Yong-gyu, which were all conducted after the 1980s we can still detect residual elements of this negative perception of Roman Catholicism. The prevalence of the anti-Roman sentiment that continues to influence the Korean Protestant historians provides us with an interesting window for understanding how Korean Protestant Christian identity has historically shaped its understanding in relation to other religions as well as other traditions within world Christianity.

While it is true that none of the Korean Protestant historians explicitly express their doubts of the "Christian-ness" of Roman Catholicism in the contents of their histories, it is nevertheless implicitly conveyed in the manner in which they structure their histories. It is interesting to note that all five of the histories maintain a uniform structure wherein brief reference is made to the possibility of Nestorianism being transmitted to the Korean peninsula. This is then followed up by a more detailed description of the arrival and establishment of Roman Catholicism. There follows, subsequently, brief narratives of key individuals from Protestant backgrounds who played significant roles in initiating the first contact of Protestantism with Korea. All of this culminates in an in-depth and detailed description and analysis of the plethora of ways in which Protestant Christianity was successfully established in Korea through the equally successful efforts of the Western Protestant missionaries.

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[228] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.27.

The significant aspect of this uniform structure is that it contrasts what the historian regards as the limited successes or even failures of each Christian group prior to the arrival of the Western Protestant missionaries in establishing a sufficient Christian presence in Korea. That the Korean Protestant historians perceive the successful establishment of particular denominationally oriented mission agencies as being the culmination of religious development in Korea, Christian and otherwise, is implied in the very manner in which they structure their historical narratives. This, in turn, reflects the degree to which the perception and understanding of Christianity in Korea has been influenced by the denominational orientation of Protestant Christianity as it established itself in Korea. As such, the Korean understanding of Christianity in general and of itself, in particular, not only embodies a historically influenced and developed lack of respect for the universality of Christian traditions but also portrays an inherent bias toward its own denominationally oriented self-understanding.

A third commonality shared by all five histories is the centrality of institutional developments within their historical narratives of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This tendency can be easily recognised by simply referring to the titles that the Korean Protestant historians give to their historical studies. The titles of the works all inadvertently bear the title of "History of the Korean Christian Church" or near identical variations of it. The only exception in this instance is the work of L. George Paik. However, despite the difference between the title of Paik's work and the other Korean Protestant historians that we are reviewing, the basic underlying subject of interest is the Protestant Christian institution, whether educational, medical, or ecclesiastical. The only contrast between Paik and the other historians is that Paik focuses his attention primarily upon the institutional establishment of the various Protestant mission boards while the other Korean Protestant historians extend their historical narrative to incorporate the Korean Protestant institutions of latter years.

The preoccupation of the Korean Protestant historians with the institutional establishment of Protestant Christianity in Korea offers an interesting insight into their understanding of Protestant Christianity as a religion. Judging from the contents of the histories written by the Korean Protestant historians it would appear that they consider a historical narrative that simply presents the ways in which the various institutions of Protestant Christianity in Korea were successfully established and subsequently grew and developed as being the best, if not the only, meaningful

depiction and interpretation of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity as a religion in Korea. Thus, within the histories by the Korean Protestant historians the reader is only able to assess whether Protestant Christianity was successful in establishing itself as an authentic religion among the Korean people by reference to the degree to which its institutions gained prominence and influence. This, in turn, explains why the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea predominantly focus on quantitative changes in institutional growth and expansion of Protestant institutions as the basis for explaining the various social and cultural changes which are attributed to the influences of Protestant Christianity. The desire to present a historical narrative of Protestant Christianity whose progress can be measured quantitatively provides the historian with a simple instrument with which to present the successful growth of Protestant Christian influence in society. In the end, numbers become the overriding criterion by which success is measured.

However, this emphasis on the quantitative elements of Protestant Christianity allows the historian, and consequently the reader, not to ask whether there were causes beyond the quantitative measurement of structures, organizations, and institutions which brought about the religious conversion of the Korean people. A quantitative narrative allows the historians to take for granted the perceived qualitative changes in Korean society, and take numerical growth as being the sole criterion for assessing the religiosity of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Unfortunately, this identification of the quantitative with the qualitative elements in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea overlooks the lived experiences of the very people who became Korean Protestant Christians. Measuring the success of a particular religion by numerical gains or losses, statistical analysis or institutional proliferation, does little to provide authentic insight to the actual religious experiences and their related phenomena as they are expressed in the religious thought of the people. In this sense, by simply centring their histories on the institutional growth and prosperity of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Korean Protestant historians fail to adequately incorporate the historical religious experiences of the Korean Protestant Christians within the very histories that claim to present a history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Thus all five of the historical narratives, regardless of their particular historiography and "differences" in methodology and perspective, present a history of Protestant Christianity as reflected in its institutions, whether ecclesiastical, medical, or educational, rather than a

history of Protestant Christianity as reflected in the religious experiences of the Korean people.

A fourth commonality is the tendency to concentrate primarily upon the historical experiences of the largest denominational missions and their resultant ecclesiastical organizations. Despite the fact that all five of the histories purport to present a historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea, in reality they are limited to primarily presenting the historical experiences of some of the Presbyterian and Methodist traditions. They are further limited in that they are centre round the historical experiences of missionaries from the United States.

Historically, it is recognised that the missionary enterprise in Korea began in earnest with the arrival of resident missionaries from the United States. Throughout the historical development of Protestantism in Korea the majority of the foreign missionaries were drawn from this geographical region. As such, many have come to regard the particular denominational character of Korean Protestant Christianity as reflecting this influence. Indeed, many will concur with the observations of one of the Korean Protestant historians in stating that "the ecclesiastical structure and faith which was introduced to Korea was closely linked with the denominational structures and contents of the churches in America."[229]

It is true that, statistically, the great majority of foreign missionaries who undertook efforts to proselytize in Korea were from the United States. It is also true that the largest group of these foreign missionaries belonged to the Presbyterian and Methodist traditions of Protestant Christianity. However, despite the numerical preponderance of missionaries from the United States, they were not the only foreign missionary influence in Korea. A significant number of missionaries came to Korea from Canada and Australia. In addition, Protestant missionaries from different countries, while not resident in Korea, profoundly influenced the development of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The most notable examples we discover in the content of the five histories of Protestant Christianity under review are those of John Ross and Jon MacIntyre, both of whom were missionaries from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland working in Manchuria.

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[229] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.143.

Therefore, a historical narrative that deals primarily with the historical experiences of some of the larger denominational agencies and their resultant indigenous ecclesiastical structures can hardly be regarded as describing the entirety of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. For this reason, presenting the particular experiences of a denominationally limited group as representative of the entire, or even a wider spectrum, of what historically has comprised Protestant Christianity in Korea can lead to a mis-informed generalisation. Furthermore, by neglecting to appreciate or acknowledge the theological and practical implications of the diverse traditions of Protestant Christianity in Korea within their historical narratives, the Korean Protestant historians present a historically formulated identity of Korean Protestant Christianity which accentuates the characteristics of one limited group at the expense of others.

It is also important that we recognise that Protestant Christianity in Korea did not develop or grow in an identical format across the geographical or societal spectrum of Korea. The variety of denominationally affiliated mission agencies which were responsible for disseminating the Christian Gospel clearly denotes the existence of different approaches and methodologies in missionary activities. In addition, each of the different Mission Boards conducted their activities in different regions of the Korean peninsula, and there were even those who went beyond to places such as Manchuria and Eastern Siberia. Each of the individual Mission Boards also conducted their missionary activities among different social and economic classes of the Korean people. As a result of such diversity each experienced varying degrees of success and failure. In addition, although the Presbyterian and Methodist denominational mission agencies routinely engaged in cooperative projects each continued to influence the particular individuals and institutions under their care along different theological and confessional lines. In addition, there were regional disparities in the success of mission policies and methods employed even within the range of activities initiated by a particular denominational Mission Board. Therefore, by concentrating upon the successful experiences of one or two specific denominations, and the historical experiences limited to a particular geographical or social group, the historian commits the error of presenting a description and interpretation of specific and particular historical experiences as representative of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a whole. Additionally, the historian presents an unwarranted self-portrait of Protestant Christianity which, in turn, influences the historically formulated self-understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity

according to narratives that present the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in light of partial accounts.

A final commonality that is worth noting within the five histories by Korean Protestant historians is the fact that they tend to focus their attention on the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea during the years prior to 1945. Of the five histories analyzed for this thesis, three extend their study of the subject to include the years after 1945.[230] However, even in these three cases more than two thirds of the entire history is taken up with events before 1945 and only one continues the narrative to include events up to the 1970s. This imbalance in the contents of the historical study of Protestant Christianity can be interpreted as reflecting the historian's view that the majority of historical experiences which are critical to the formation of a self-understanding for Korean Protestant Christianity occurred during the years before 1945.

It can certainly be conceded that many of the characteristics which have traditionally come to define Protestant Christianity in Korea were formed in the earlier periods of its historical experience in Korea. However, it must also be acknowledged that many of these characteristics continued to change and evolve within the various contexts in which the faith of the Korean Protestant Christians was practiced. In order for us to appropriately analyse the historical experiences of how Protestant Christianity was appropriated as a religion by the Korean people it is important that we consider the regional differences stemming from the different degrees of accommodation by Koreans in their religious experience of Protestantism.

Although the larger denominational mission agencies of the Presbyterians and Methodists collaborated in their activities this does not mean that a homogeneous interpretation of Presbyterianism or Methodism prevailed throughout Korea. Strong theological differences relating to particular issues emanated from different regions according to the backgrounds of the various Presbyterian or Methodist missions dominating a given geographical area. In addition, the various influences of secular intellectual developments also influenced the way Korean Protestants not only appropriated the Christian message, but also expressed it in the particular socio-politico-cultural context in which they found themselves. In many respects, the self-

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[230] The three are Min, Gyeong-bae's *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, Kim, Young-jae's *Hangug Gyowhesa* and Park, Yong-gyu's *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*.

understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity was, and continues to be, formulated under the influence of the historical experiences that the very people who are Korean Protestant Christians share as they appropriate their faith and apply it to their lived realities.

Despite the existence of significant differences within the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the asymmetrical treatment of the Protestant Christian historical experience helps to preserve a historical interpretation and narrative which presents Protestant Christianity as maintaining a homogenous character. The portrayal of Protestant Christianity as sustaining a degree of homogeneity in its formation and development throughout its historical experience in Korea also allows the historical narratives of Protestant Christianity in Korea to carefully nurture a self-identity of itself with strong links to the identity of the Korean nation, which is itself regarded as being homogenous.

In this regard, another reason that the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea tend to focus on events before 1945 may be because the identity of Korean Protestant Christianity is regarded as having been moulded historically in the fire of suffering and tribulation of the Japanese occupation. Throughout all five of the histories written by the Korean Protestant historian one can detect a strong desire to identify Protestant Christian activities and values with nationalistic sentiments.

The perception of Protestant Christianity as an almighty saving power reflects an understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea which views it as the religion that would save the nation from the internal destructive forces of ignorance of enlightenment as well as from external demonic forces of Japanese colonial aggression. The Korean Protestant historians consider Protestant Christianity to be an ideal substitute to the politico-religious Confucianism as the new national religion through which the emergence of a modern and enlightened Korean nation was effected with efficacy. This leads the historians to mould an identity of Protestant Christianity within their historical narratives which solidifies its position and role as 'the' national religion of the Korean people to enhance and strengthen the national identity of Korea in direct opposition to the threats of the Japanese colonial powers.

The qualitative contributions that are attributed to the positive influences of Protestant Christianity in nurturing Korean national identity are further amplified by presenting the quantitative dimensions of institutional change that had been effected by Protestant Christianity in terms of promoting the modernisation and

westernisation of Korea. In addition, the activities of individual Koreans who openly and actively supported the establishment of Protestant mission activities as well as encouraging the westernisation of Korean society, are narrated in nationalist terms which refer to their activities as patriotic contributions for the benefit of the nation. Contrary to the historical depiction of Roman Catholic supporters, the collaborators of Protestant Christianity, a different form of western-ness, are depicted not as vile traitors of the nation but rather the enlightened and energetic contributors to nation building. In this respect, the establishment and growth of Protestant Christianity itself is interpreted as contributing to the development, support, and nurturing of national integrity.

By emphasizing the historical experiences of the Protestant Christian community during the difficult years of Japanese occupation this identification of Protestant Christian identity and the Korean national identity is broadened in scope and intensified in emotion. By focusing the historical narrative of Protestant Christianity on the historical experiences that occurred before 1945 the historians attempt to mould an identity of Protestant Christianity in Korea that they think reflects the homogeneity of the Korean nation in its common internal characteristics as well as one that identifies with the people in sharing a common external enemy against whom their identity has taken shape and expression. The numerous attempts to relate the political developments of Korea as having been closely intertwined with the religious developments of Protestantism can also be interpreted as efforts of the historians to present a historical self-understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity which is built upon the socio-political identification of its historical experiences with those of Korean nationalism.

Although only Min, Gyeong-bae advocates a historiography that is based on nationalist ideals, the four other histories bear clear traces of a nationalist orientation. All five of the histories are written so that the contents of the histories accentuate the pro-nationalist characteristics of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In addition, the structure of the history is organized in such a way that the positive influences and contributions of Protestant Christianity relating to the aspirations of the Korean people appear in the most favourable light. Furthermore, the activities of select individual Christians are presented in a way which suggests that they were the sole or central contributors to particular socio-political organizations and the key individuals behind significant changes that occurred in the historical experiences of the Korean

people with specific nationalist intentions and goals. As a result, the five histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea function as works of historical apologetics which serve to highlight the contributions of Protestant Christianity while veiling its errors. An additional concern with regard to such a strong nationalist orientation of the histories is that it leads the historical narratives to overlook the universal character of Protestant Christianity as a world religion.

### 3. Critical and Comparative Analysis of Bibliographical Sources

Before we conclude this comparative and critical analysis of the structure and contents of the five histories by Korean Protestant historians we need to review one other aspect, their selection and use of bibliographical sources. A comparative and critical analysis of the bibliographical material utilised by the five Korean Protestant historians to construct their historical narratives reveals two interesting features. The first is a heavy dependence upon primary material from non-Korean sources, i.e. missionary literature. A "primary source" can be defined as "a document, datum, or artefact that belongs to the era under examination and that offers the most direct access to the person or issues being studied."[231] With regard to the primary sources utilised by the Korean Protestant historians in their study of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea the majority of the sources originate from the Western missionaries who were either presently working or had worked in Korea. Considering the fact that the Korean Protestant historians succeeding the seminal work of L. George Paik regarded his over-dependency on source material from missionary quarters in the writing of his historical narrative as detracting from presenting an authentic historical account of a Korean history of Protestant Christianity, this feature is worthy of further exploration.

Coincidentally, Min, Gyeong-bae, who developed his particular nationalist historiography as a reaction against what he regarded as Paik's missions centred history, also draws much of his primary source material from the writings of the missionaries and other western scholars. In a similar way, the historians of the

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[231] James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History*, p.39.

Institute, while applauding the efforts of Korean scholars to locate and utilize materials from within Korea, also rely heavily on sources by those outside Korea for their history. This tendency to primarily rely on non-Korean sources can also be found, with little variation, within the histories of Kim, Young-jae and Park, Yong-gyu. Therefore, despite the rhetoric of the Korean Protestant historians urging the development and utilisation of Korean sources in the writing of a history of Protestant Christianity in Korea they uniformly fail to apply this principle in their own practice of writing history.

When we consider the fact that the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea began as the result of foreign missions originating from outside of Korea it is natural that material from non-Korean sources should be included as primary and secondary source material. In many respects, the materials written by the missionaries during the initial periods of missionary activity may be the only sources to be had that can provide the historian with information regarding that particular period of Protestant Christianity in Korea. These documents, written by the individuals who were most intimately involved with the mission projects in Korea, can be regarded as a legitimate source of information and provide valuable insight into how certain historical events unfolded. However, it is also important for the Korean Protestant historian to constantly bear in mind that "the very evidences the historian examines are far from neutral."[232] This is because "we preserve what we view as important" and "individuals frequently decide which of their works they want to have survive and which they do not."[233] Therefore, as two scholars observed,

> history is not nearly so concrete as we would like to think it is. . . . the so-called "facts" of history are not objects like bricks that can be readily handled and manipulated. There are numerous problems inherent in the documents that demand critical reading and analysis and, most importantly, the document itself may point only indirectly toward the event or action that inspired it. The document . . . is not an

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[232] *Ibid.*, p.38.

[233] *Ibid.*, p.37.

> event but a trace, a result from which the historian attempts to identify and describe a historical occurrence.[234]

Although the non-Korean sources may present us with specific details by which we can ascertain how they understood particular events to have transpired they cannot be regarded as providing an exhaustive account of the entire context surrounding these events. Nor can they be regarded as conveying a thorough account of the entire process by which the causal relations of various factors culminated in a particular result surrounding a specific historical event.

Let us consider, for example, the numerous reports that were written by the missionaries in which details of their activities are found. Since they were written by a specific individual working within a particular context the report would likely convey information on that context. If the report was about a certain policy adopted by the wider Mission Board to be applied by the individual missionaries it would naturally contain comments and information about how this was applied by the particular individual writing the report and contain some information on the results which followed. However, this report, in itself, will not provide the historian with the necessary information to track and trace the process by which this particular policy came to be formulated and adopted. Neither will it provide the historian with information regarding the experiences of the missionaries and their evaluation of the response of the Korean people to their activities which might have provided the stimulus for reviewing and revising previous policies of the mission. In order to gain this information the historian would need to conduct a wider and more thorough research into the surrounding context not only of the individual mission in which the missionary writing the report was situated, but also of the wider mission field of Korea in which missionaries worked. However, in conducting this broader research the Korean Protestant historian must also take note of the fact that because these documents only contain the narratives of the missionaries their contents might be limited to simply narrating a perspective reflecting the foreign missionary's view of events. In this respect, simply turning to the sources of the missionaries for information without attempting to cross reference the contents of the documents with contemporary Korean sources, as and where they are available, can lead to the

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[234] *Ibid.*

history of the Korean Protestant historian becoming a narrative of a "foreign" religion as espoused and practiced by foreign missionaries. In this regard, although the role and importance of missionary documentation cannot be denied in order to properly understand the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, especially during the earlier formative period when the influence of missionaries was strongest, this needs to be balanced with information gathered through documentation or records from the wider context of Korea, as well as any possible records containing the experiences of Korean Protestant Christians.

While I do not wish to contest the claim of the paucity of Korean material in the early period, I do wish to raise a particular issue with regard to the matter of methodology and perspective. The lack of primary sources originating from the pen of Korean Protestants is an issue that the Korean Protestant historian must grapple with as best he can. Despite this, there are methods which enable the historian to glean crucial clues of the historical context under study through primary sources that originated from non-Korean sources. A *critical* reading of the reports by the missions, the letters and diaries of individual missionaries and the various articles printed in mission publications can be utilized by the historian to interpret, albeit obliquely, the Korean response to the events narrated within the sources. However, the Korean Protestant historians' level of interpretive interaction with the primary sources remains simply that of reading and citing the contents of the source to fit the flow of the narrative, a narrative which is predominantly interested in presenting how the institutional activities of the missions prospered and which consequently portrays the historical experiences centring round the missionaries. The failure of the Korean Protestant historians to engage the source materials available in conducting a holistic historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea ultimately results in poor scholarship. In spite of the fact that each historian purportedly utilises a new and different historiography for his study of Protestant Christianity in Korea their failure to identify or uncover new source material for historical investigation results in the same material sources being uncritically used, and subsequently misused if not out rightly abused, by consecutive historians so as to simply construct their histories to fit their interests. The absence of any significant new source materials combined with a lethargic approach to the analysis and interpretation of already existing materials that replicate the 'traditionalised' historical narrative without any serious efforts at a critical hermeneutic leads to a reproduction of histories with identical depictions and interpretations of those events and individuals that are already found

in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In this sense, it is not the preponderance of non-Korean sources, nor the lack of Korean sources that causes the historical narratives of Protestant Christianity in Korea to resemble standardized texts of historical apologetics and become replications of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative. Rather, this is the result of a failure by the Korean Protestant historian to incorporate a methodological rigour necessary in engaging the available sources.

The second critique regarding the selection and use of bibliographical sources by Korean Protestant historians is related to their uncritical use of secondary material dealing with the general historical context of Korea, particularly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By definition, secondary sources can be regarded as "sources that offer information about an event but stand removed from it either in time or by a process of transmission of information."[235] As such, "a secondary source is secondary to or in some sense removed from the event in question; it is not a direct or primary trace of the event."[236] More importantly, one must remember that secondary materials are only "indirect sources of information."[237] Therefore, care is needed in using secondary material within the historical narrative because "they embody elements of selectivity and interpretation"[238] regarding the subject or context.

However, all five of the Korean Protestant historians uncritically appropriate contents of secondary materials to construct their review of the historical context when Protestant Christianity was introduced to Korea. Similar to the argument noted above for utilizing non-Korean sources as the primary channel for information regarding early Protestant activities in Korea, the Korean Protestant historian could once again argue that the preponderant use of such materials is due to an insufficient base of indigenous Korean sources. Although this argument could have sufficed for L. George Paik who wrote his history at a time and location where Korean source material on the historical context of Korea was difficult to obtain, subsequent historians are hard pressed to justify this argument in light of the plethora of research that has accumulated over the years on the social, political, cultural and religious

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[235] *Ibid.*, p.41.

[236] *Ibid.*

[237] *Ibid.*

[238] *Ibid.*

history of Korea, as well as original documentation stemming from this era. Over the past forty years the quality and quantity of studies regarding the social, political, cultural, and religious context of late 19th and early 20th century Korea have dramatically increased. Therefore, the failure of the Korean Protestant historians to take account of the advances in scholarly research is difficult to justify. By thus failing to appropriately analyse and review the secondary materials relevant to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea the Korean Protestant historians "fail to contribute anything new either to the current scholarly dialogue about a historical topic or, indeed, to the general fund of human knowledge."[239]

As a result of failing to assess recent developments in the related field of historical studies regarding Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, not to mention other periods, the Korean Protestant historians fail once again to utilise a critical hermeneutic of the existing sources, as well as new material, in keeping with the ideals of historiography espoused by the scholarly historian. The consequent failure of the Korean Protestant historians to fully utilize their purportedly new historiographical perspectives in researching the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea results in their histories becoming, once again, simple repetitions of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative. It further consigns their histories to serving as a historical apologetic for the particular self-identity of Korean Protestant Christianity continually reproduced by the dominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

**Conclusion**

The comparative and critical analysis of the format, content and source materials used by the Korean Protestant historians in their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea has revealed that they share certain common characteristics. It has further been shown that these common characteristics lead to the five histories being nearly identical in their depiction, interpretation and presentation of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

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[239] *Ibid.*, p.42.

However, what is more worrying about these common characteristics is that they point to unanimity in how the Korean Protestant historian approaches the subject itself. The degree to which the five histories overlap in their format and contents reveals a degree of conformity with regard to what events and experiences are regarded as representative of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The fact that such nearly identical histories are reproduced in spite of the purported utilisation of different historiographies which imply different methods of study and perspectives of interpretation fuels the concern whether the Korean Protestant historian is truly capable of conducting a sufficiently new and different study of Protestant Christianity in Korea and present an authentic and unique interpretation of its historical experiences.

Additionally, the uniform nature of the five histories which purportedly utilise different historiographies raises the question of what function the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is serving. Rather than the five different historians providing sufficiently objective and authoritative presentations of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, their histories primarily function as a historical apologetic for Protestant Christian contributions to the historical experience of the Korean nation. In this regard, the identical emphasis that the five histories place on the role of Protestant Christianity in affecting the modernisation and westernisation of Korean society, which is identified with progress, growth and success combined with a strong appeal to nationalist emotions is utilised to glamorise and romanticise the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, whose people benefited from the presence of Protestantism.

In many ways it appears as if the Korean Protestant historians initiate their historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea in order to legitimate a particular understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In other words, it appears as if the historical studies of the Korean Protestant historians are not attempts to uncover the process by which a Korean Protestant Christianity came to be formulated through an investigation of its historical experiences but are rather an attempt to present a historical narrative which justifies a preconceived conception of Korean Protestant Christianity that already exists in the mind of the Korean Protestant historian. Therefore, utilising different historiographies to study the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea are not efforts to present a different or alternative interpretation. On the contrary, they are primarily attempts to secure this

preconceived notion of Korean Protestant Christianity by providing evidence through an appeal to 'historical' data. Consequently, the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians is an exercise of introspection where the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity are investigated with total disregard to the wider historical experience of the Korean people in general. This lack of contextual grounding of their historical study is further exemplified and exacerbated by the way in which they fail to acknowledge the academic contributions that developments in the historical study of Korea could provide for constructing their historiographies and supporting arguments. The failure of the Korean Protestant historians to conduct their historical studies with methodological integrity, coupled with their total lack of appreciation for and incorporation of the particular contexts in which their historical investigations are taking place, culminate in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians resulting in a partisan account which only serves to strengthen the 'historicised' historical narrative. This alienates rather than incorporates the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea within the wider context of Korean social and religious history.

# Chapter 4 – A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the Role of the Bible in the Historical Experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea

## Introduction

The previous chapters have helped us to place the development of Korean Protestant Christianity in context. They have also allowed us to identify the ways in which the Korean Protestant historians have failed to sufficiently place their historiographies within this context and the consequences of such failures. More importantly, it has enabled us to critically reflect upon the practice of the Korean Protestant historians as they engage in a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This reflection has led us to identify a dominant mono-narrative that functions as a meta-narrative, producing a 'traditionalised' historical account of Protestant Christianity in Korea that remains unchallenged. The question which arises, then, is how the relation of historiography, history writing and the self-understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea which results from these histories in turn influences and shapes the actual practice of historical studies on Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians.

In the following three chapters we will attempt to critically and comparatively analyse this relationship between historiography, history writing and the formation of identity as an expression of historical self-understanding by looking at three specific experiences within the vast plethora of historical experiences that have come together to shape Protestant Christianity in Korea. Each chapter will attempt to analyse the purportedly different perspectives and methodologies which the Korean Protestant historians assert to have utilised in a critical and comparative manner. This will allow us to demonstrate that in spite of the assertions set forth by the Korean Protestant historians their historical studies inevitably revert to the presentation of the dominant mono-narrative and simply replicate the 'traditionalised' historical account of the particular experience in question. Such replication results in the supposedly different historical studies coalescing into a presentation of Protestant Christianity in Korea which merely strengthens the already established self-understanding of

Protestant Christianity in Korea that is based on the 'traditionalised' historical account.

Our comparative and critical analysis will show that the relation between the way the historian formulates a particular perspective and methodological approach to historical study, the actual writing of history and the resultant historical self-understanding which the reader receives through it functions in a circular manner, as a cycle of mutual influence. We hope to further reveal how a particular self-understanding of Korean Protestant Christianity, itself a historical construct, functions to influence the way in which the Korean Protestant historians develop their historiographies in such a way that it becomes an uncritical repetition of identical narratives. We will attempt to clearly demonstrate that this cycle of mutual influence affects the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. So long as the Korean Protestant historian fails to address the domineering influence of this 'traditionalised' historical narrative and its cyclical relationship in effecting the development of historiography and the actual writing of history it will continue to function as a dominant narrative subsuming the whole endeavour of historical studies concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Our critical and comparative analysis of particular experiences begins with the examination of the role of the Bible in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea within the histories by Korean Protestant historians. Within the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea the Bible has long been regarded as one of the central elements that have shaped and defined its characteristics. The histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by the Korean Protestant historian describe and interpret the particular relationship between the Korean Protestant Christians and the Korean vernacular Bible as being distinctively unique and different from the historical experiences of any other mission field or people group. In reading the historical narratives surrounding the Bible as they have been presented by the Korean Protestant historian one cannot help but feel that the position of the Bible has been given an almost mythical aura and idol-like position. Within their histories the Korean Protestant historians present accounts in which individuals and entire villages were reported to have converted to Protestantism through a religious experience that occurred as a result of simply being exposed to the text of the Korean vernacular Bible. Such experiences lead the Korean Protestant historians to interpret such experiences as historical evidence testifying to the power of the Word of God to

transform lives. The historical accounts of the Korean Protestant Christian's interaction with the Bible are also presented in a manner which accentuates the position of power and authority that the Bible is regarded as holding over the life and faith of Korean Protestant Christianity.

In order to adequately assess the extent to which the domineering influence of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative affects interpretations of the Korean Protestant historical experience with the Bible, this chapter will analyse how the five histories continually replicate identical descriptions and interpretations of a single element in the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea and seek to identify the causes behind them.

## 1. Common Threads in the Histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea Regarding the Bible

Within the five histories by Korean Protestant historians we can distinctly identify three specific commonalities regarding the Bible and Protestant Christianity in Korea. The first is an attempt to highlight the difference between the two traditions of Christianity in Korea, Roman Catholic and Protestant, by using the Bible as a distinctive symbol of demarcation. The Korean Protestant historians attempt to utilise the historical experiences surrounding the Bible as a sign of providential preference for their particular tradition. They also attempt to portray the role of the Bible in each tradition as somehow relating to the different levels of patriotism and national loyalty within the historical experiences of the two branches of Christianity as they were experienced in Korea.

A second commonality is the emphasis on the indigenous contribution in the translation of the Bible. The process by which the Korean vernacular Bible came into existence is regarded as the hallmark of Korean Protestant Christianity's indigeneity reflecting the way in which the Korean people pro-actively appropriated Protestant Christianity. The existence of a vernacular Bible preceding the arrival of resident Protestant missionaries is regarded as characterising the progressive enthusiasm of the Koreans toward Protestant Christianity. It is also depicted as representative of the Korean-ness of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

A third commonality shared by the Korean Protestant historians is their portrayal of the mystical powers of the Bible, as the Word of God, in effecting a religious conversion experience among individuals. This, closely associated with the idea of Korean enthusiasm for Protestant Christianity, is utilised by the Korean Protestant historian to depict an indigenous and pro-active appropriation of Protestant Christianity by Koreans. The Korean Protestant historian describes and interprets the receipt of the Bible by the Korean people as representing a religious conversion experience. Therefore, the quantitative increase in Bible distribution is automatically equated with an increase in the religious influence of Protestant Christianity among the Korean people. This is then interpreted as signifying the extent to which Protestant Christianity was readily appropriated by the Koreans as a valid, effective and meaningful religion.

In order to better analyse the reasons behind these commonalities we will look at each in turn and attempt a critical and comparative analysis of the five histories in order to draw out some of the shared presuppositions and perspectives of the Korean Protestant historians. Through this comparative analysis we will attempt to identify where and how a particular self-identity of Korean Protestant Christianity has affected the method of study and practice of writing concerning the historical experience of the Bible in Protestant Christianity in Korea. We will then attempt to engage in a critical analysis of each and present evidence which challenges the 'traditionalised' historical narrative as it is currently manifested in the histories by Korean Protestant historians.

## 2. The Bible as a Protestant Prerogative

It had been noted in a previous chapter that the Korean Protestant historians all include a brief and general overview of the historical experience of Roman Catholicism in Korea. There are even those who go so far as to extend the periods covered in their historical studies to include the possibilities of Nestorian contacts with Korea. Paik allocates a mere thirteen pages to the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in Korea. Min, whose history comprises five hundred and sixty-nine pages, presents the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in seventy-

eight pages and also attempts to present an argument for Nestorian influences in Korea in eight pages. The history by the Institute comprises two volumes with a total of seven hundred and twenty pages, including appendices. Out of this, fifteen pages are used to describe a brief historical overview of Nestorianism and its possible introduction to Korea. Additionally, eighty-two pages are allocated for presenting a historical overview of Roman Catholicism in Korea. The historical study by Park comprises an amazing two thousand and sixty pages in two volumes. Within this history eighteen pages are allocated for the historical overview of Nestorianism and its possible contacts with Korea while seventy-two pages are used for presenting a brief historical overview of Roman Catholicism in Korea. Kim's history comprises three hundred eighty-five pages, including appendices. Out of this twelve pages describe the possibility of Nestorian contacts with Korea and eleven pages the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in Korea. Of the four instances where reference to Nestorianism is made by the Korean Protestant historians they follow an identical format of briefly describing what Nestorianism is, how it came to arrive in China and the arguments advanced by certain scholars for its possible introduction to Korea. All four of these rely on materials written by other scholars and historians on the subject and do not necessarily include anything that could be construed as original historical research on the subject that would add to scholarly knowledge of Nestorian contacts with Korea. Nor do any of the Korean Protestant historians advance any substantially new historical evidence which would serve to either supplement or refute existing scholarly opinion on Nestorianism and its possible contacts with Korea. Therefore, we can only surmise that by repeating this simple and generalised overview of Nestorianism and its possible contacts with Korea the Korean Protestant historian is attempting to present an image of a particular Christian tradition that attempted to enter Korea but failed in its attempts. This surmise is further supported by the near identical repetitions of the historical experiences of Roman Catholicism in Korea which similarly portray it as having been unable to adequately establish its presence in Korea and thereby influence Korean historical experiences in a manner similar to that of Protestantism. As such, the habitual repetition of a simplified and generalised historical review of both traditions in the histories by Korean Protestant historians can be interpreted as merely serving as a contextual backdrop against which the successful establishment of Protestant Christianity and its subsequent influence in modernising and enlightening the Korean people can be portrayed. However, in spite of the fact that

all five historians refer to their histories as being a historical study of "Christianity in Korea" their main efforts remain focused on presenting the historical experiences of Protestantism. As such, the portions of their history which contain narratives regarding other Christian traditions are also presented from a Protestant perspective. The inclusion of the historical experiences of other Christian traditions merely serves to present a contextual backdrop against which the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity are aggrandised.

This aggrandisement of the Protestant tradition details the faults of the other tradition and is specifically manifest in the negative portrayal of Roman Catholic historical experiences and a deprecation of its religious significance. A common criticism utilised by the Korean Protestant historian to denigrate the religious character of Roman Catholicism is the argument that the Korean Catholics were "untaught of the Scripture."[240] According to the Korean Protestant historian, not only did the Catholic missionaries fail to teach the Bible to their Korean converts, they failed "to translate a single Gospel or any portion of the Bible."[241] For the Korean Protestant historian the absence of "Scripture" in the form of a translated Korean vernacular Bible within the religious life of the Korean Roman Catholics is sufficient evidence to conclude that they lacked the wherewithal to grow "in grace and life"[242] and, consequently were not imbibed with a "Biblical and evangelical faith."[243]

Employing the Bible as the standard criterion for judging the religious validity of a particular Christian tradition can be regarded as an attempt to interpret the historical experiences of a particular tradition from a specific theological perspective. Given that both traditions of Christianity took root in Korea as a result of Western missionary efforts, it would seem appropriate to search for the origins of the difference in historical experiences within the particular mission theories or theologies of mission that each tradition adhered to. One would also need to consider the particular context in which the specific mission theories and theologies

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[240] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.42; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.111; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.224;

[241] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.42; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.224.

[242] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.43.

[243] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.111; Park, Yong-yu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.225.

were applied as that can alter their practical application at any given point in time. Care would also need to be taken to ensure that the historian was not juxtaposing two different and incompatible concepts which could not be adequately compared.

Unfortunately, the histories by the Korean Protestant historian reflect neither an awareness of the different approaches to mission adopted by each tradition nor a serious questioning of whether the presence or absence of the Bible is an appropriate criterion for comparing the mission activities of Roman Catholicism with Protestantism. As a result, the Korean Protestant historian engages in a critique of one tradition from the values and theological positions of another without fully appreciating the historical process and developments that led to the two traditions being different from each other. By neglecting to study the historical processes by which the Bible, particularly the vernacular Bible, came to prominence in the Protestant tradition but not the Roman Catholic, the Korean Protestant historian projects a particularly biased interpretation of the practices of one tradition over that of the other.[244] That this theological bias is recycled in all five histories can be interpreted as reflecting the degree to which the Korean Protestant historian has accepted a particular perspective toward historical studies of Christianity in Korea. It also reflects the degree to which the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea are fruits of habitual repetition rather than authentic historical research.

Further contributing to a negative evaluation of Roman Catholicism in Korea is the fact that Roman Catholic teachings were first introduced as part of Western learning that had attracted the interest and respect of certain groups of the *yangban* literati. Over time the interest in this particular form of Western learning by

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[244] R.S. Sugirtharajah presents a concise overview of how the Church's policy toward and practice of using the Bible in the worship and life of the faithful developed, historically. He describes how up until the 1800s the Bible was not widely available to the public for a variety of reasons, including the lack of developments in printing, lack of an adequate Bible reading public to justify the printing of vernacular Bibles en masse, and the hesitancy of the Church and State authorities in providing the Bible to the laity. Contrary to the Korean Protestant historians' thinking on the subject the importance of the Bible in the life of the Christian Church was not lost in the theology of the Roman Catholics. However, in spite of this awareness the Roman Catholic missionaries were more interested in "rational theology over narrative theology; popular preaching over exegesis; natural science over scriptural sciences" and this reduced their interest in Bible translation. In addition, the anthropological attitude of the European missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church regarded the non-European peoples from being "incapable of comprehending the loftier truths lodged in the naked texts of the Bible without proper and prior preparation." This led them to engage in translating catechists and religious tracts by which such preparation could be conducted. For more details see R.S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Pre-colonial, Colonial, and Post-colonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.45-51.

individual *yangban* gradually led to the adoption of religious rituals, the formation of ecclesiastical structures and the subsequent establishment of a Korean Roman Catholic Church. However, for the majority of the Korean literati, who were steeped in their orthodox Confucianism, Western learning was merely a philosophical heterodox. Additionally, for the gentry who held political control of the kingdom by virtue of possessing the orthodox philosophical basis of political ideology, the Western learning became an ideological challenge which threatened the political and social status quo of traditional Korean society. In a society that operated on a worldview which was dominated by a religious philosophy, Confucianism, the affinity of political challenge and religious heresy was such that one was automatically identified with the other. This explains why the Korean Protestant historians overwhelmingly interpret the persecutions that the Korean Roman Catholics suffered at the hands of the Korean government as primarily resulting from political intrigue and oppression rather than religious opposition.[245] In many ways, this reflects the dominant interpretation of the Roman Catholic historical experience in Korea presented by scholars of Korean history regardless of their religious affiliation.[246]

The historical perception of Korean Roman Catholicism, at least during its initial beginnings, as being more political ideology than religious idiosyncrasy is further strengthened from the Korean Protestant historian's perspective because they regard it as lacking the most important criterion of a valid Christian religion, a Korean vernacular Bible. Hence, the Korean Protestant historian no longer feels it necessary to be concerned with attempting to engage in a study of Christianity in Korea which attempts to incorporate both traditions, Roman Catholic and Protestant. He need only be concerned with presenting the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity, the "true" form of Christianity, which has the Gospel in its grasp in the form of the Korean vernacular Bible and which was eagerly received, at the outset, by the Korean people as a religion and not as an alternative political ideology.

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[245] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.35; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.109; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.81, 89, 100, 115; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.223.

[246] Reference to the effect that the Korean Roman Catholics suffered persecution because of the danger they posed to the Confucian dominated status quo can also be found in histories of Korean Roman Catholicism written by Korean Catholic historians. For example, Moon, Gyu-hyeon, *Minjoggwa Hamgge Sseuneun Hangug Cheonjugyowhesa* 1 (A History of Korean Roman Catholicism – A Nationalist Interpretation) (Seoul: Bitdure, 1994), p.27.

However, it is worthwhile to note that the historical conception of Korean Roman Catholicism as being more a political ideology than a religious idiosyncrasy relates to a very short period. The historical development of Roman Catholicism in Korea clearly shows that what started as an intellectual interest by an elite group soon became a popular religion reaching all levels of Korean society. A survey of Korean Roman Catholics who had been captured by the government and questioned shows the degree to which a growing perception of it as a viable religion was influential in the growth of Roman Catholicism in Korea. During the persecution that took place in 1866 individuals were specifically questioned with regard to their reason for becoming a Roman Catholic. Of those who gave evidence of their reason 55.77% stated that they had become Catholics because of interest in the afterlife. Of this number the greatest majority were women (88.71%). Those who explained their affiliation with Roman Catholicism as being due to the impressive superiority of Western learning were primarily men and comprised 23.08% of the total.[247]

Furthermore, this development of the religious attributes of Korean Roman Catholicism encountered a new phase of growth and advance when Protestant Christianity finally arrived on the Korean religious scene. The opening of Korea to foreign trade and interaction provided sufficient space for the advancement of Western religion, both Protestant and Roman Catholic.[248] In terms of the development and growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Korea, a series of protocols and agreements between the Korean government and the Church ensured Roman Catholicism a religious status in Korea. For example, in March of 1899 a "Convention Between the People of Korea and the Korean Roman Catholic Church" was signed by Bishop G. Mütel of the Korean Catholic Church and Jeong, Jun-si, head of the Rural Department within the Ministry of Interior. This Convention is important because it was the first time that freedom of religious expression was granted to the Korean people.[249] This Convention also specified that each would not

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[247] *Ibid.*, p.94.

[248] Eric O. Hanson states that when the Japanese annexed Korea in 1910 there was a single Korean vicariate with "fifteen native priests, forty-six foreign missionaries, fifty-nine sisters, forty-one seminarians, sixty-nine churches, and a total of 73,517 Catholics." This followed an increase from four thousand in 1795 to ten thousand in 1800 and further growth after the Ganghwa Treaty of 1876 and the Korean-French Treaty in 1886. Eric O. Hanson, *Catholic Politics in China and Korea* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980), p.27.

[249] Moon, Gyu-hyeon, *Minjoggwa Hamgge Sseuneun Hangug Cheonjugyowhesa* 1., p.32.

infringe upon the authority of the other and adhere to a strict separation of Church and State.[250]

As the above developments indicate, a rapid expansion of space, spatially as well as legally, was accorded the Korean Roman Catholic Church during the period when Korea began to open her doors and engage in diplomatic and commercial intercourse with other countries. This freedom of movement and expansion was seized upon by the Korean Roman Catholic Church with the result that by 1900 there were forty parish churches and sixty one schools, primarily of primary education levels, throughout the country.[251]

The brief examples examined above show that regarding Korean Roman Catholicism as a primarily political ideology rather than and authentic religion of the Korean people is a categorical description which is only relevant to the initial period of its history. Therefore, a history of Christianity in Korea which presupposes a historical segregation between the two traditions cannot be regarded as adequately reflecting the religious context of Korea. By presuming a relationship of historical irrelevance between the two traditions of Christianity in Korea the Korean Protestant historian summarily dismisses the possibility of any religious or cultural influence of Roman Catholicism on Protestantism in the historical experience of Christianity in Korea. This not only leads to a hermetical perception of history but also prematurely judges the historical validity of the other. The tendency of the Korean Protestant historians to deny Roman Catholicism the status of a valid religion of the Korean people, and their reluctance to acknowledge the 'Christian-ness' of Roman Catholicism in general on the basis of a subjective criterion, such as the existence of a Korean vernacular Bible, can be interpreted as symbolising this hermetic attitude toward history.

The preponderance of this segregationist approach to the history of Christianity in Korea can be seen as reflecting the attitudes held by the earliest Protestant missionaries to Korea rather than resulting from any authentic historical research on the part of the Korean Protestant historian. The strong dislike for Romanism by the earliest Protestant missionaries to Korea can be attributed to the religious attitude of the early emigrants to North America who viewed their nation as primarily a

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[250] *Ibid.*, p.90.

[251] *Ibid.*, p.34.

Protestant one and harboured a deep bias against Roman Catholicism.[252] The reproduction of this distrust and bias against Roman Catholics by the Korean Protestant historian reveals a general practice of uncritical repetition of the missionaries' perspective regarding historical events as well as their depictions and interpretations contained in the various histories of Protestant Christian history in Korea written by the missionaries. This would seem to indicate two important characteristics of the historical studies that have been undertaken by the Korean Protestant historian. The first is that despite the purported utilisation of different historiographies the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea does not produce scholarly studies based on authentic research. Secondly, the practice of historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea primarily serves to perpetuate and promote a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-identity that is itself a historically formulated product and further propagated through the repeated presentation of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative by the Korean Protestant historian.

### 3. The Korean Contribution to Translation

The religious superiority of Protestantism that is assumed by the Korean Protestant historians in their histories reflects another historical element that has fostered pride in the character of Korean Protestant Christianity. This sense of pride originates from the historical narratives regarding what is argued as the Korean contribution to translating the Bible in Korean. Due to the emphasis that the Korean Protestant places on the presence of a vernacular Bible, the fact that Koreans actively contributed to its production is regarded as a source of immense pride and satisfaction. For the Korean Protestant historian, this contribution by Koreans displays the uniquely strong indigenous and pro-active character of Korean Protestant Christianity. The degree of pro-active and indigenous initiative assumed by the earliest of Korean converts to Protestantism is adulated in the contents of all

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[252] Refer to Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards, "Forging an Ideology for American Missions: Josiah Strong and Manifest Destiny" in Wilbert R. Shenk ed., *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), pp.176-9.

five histories by the Korean Protestant historian. More specifically, the histories focus on the Korean participation and contribution in the work of translation and the role that the Korean colporteurs played in the dissemination of Christian publications. This focus forms the basis upon which the Korean Protestant historians identify the Korean Protestant Christian self-identity as being strongly indigenous and pro-active in nature.

When one examines the history of Bible translation into the Korean vernacular contained in the histories by Korean Protestant historians we find that there are two distinct phases. The first phase occurred during the early period of initial contact between Protestant Christianity and the Korean people. This phase first began with the initiative taken by John Ross, a United Presbyterian Church of Scotland missionary to China, who undertook the translation and publication of the first Korean vernacular Bible. The first phase is usually identified as having taken place between 1877 and 1886.[253] The second phase is identified as having begun after Western missionaries had established themselves in Korea and had started to engage directly in mission activities. This second phase lasted from the late 1880s and continued until the Korean Standard Version of the Bible was officially completed in the 1930s.[254]

In presenting the historical experiences related to the translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular, the Korean Protestant historians consistently adopt a chronological narrative format. As such, the process of Bible translation is not dealt with in the histories as a subject in itself. Rather, it is incorporated into the larger narrative which details the chronological development and growth of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This format is identical throughout all five histories. It may

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[253] There are conflicting dates as to when the initial process of translation began. Min, Gyeong-bae states that John Ross and John McIntyre were engaged in the translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular with the help of two Koreans as early as 1873. Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.168. However, the Institute places the beginning of Bible translation in the year 1877 and states that it continued until 1886. According to the Institute the period from 1874 to 1877 was the preparatory period when Ross completed work on his *Corean Primer* and familiarised himself with the literature, history and culture of Korea. This led to the publication of *History of Corea, Ancient and Modern* in 1879. The second period ran from the summer of 1877 to April 1879 when Ross returned home for furlough. The third period was from May 1879 until May 1881 during which McIntyre took over the management of translation and proofreading. The final period is seen as having been from June 1881 to the Autumn of 1886 when the entire Bible was translated and published. IKCHS ed., *Hangug GIdoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.146-51.

[254] The official Korean Authorized Version was published in 1936. Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.255.

be argued that a chronological narrative is useful in presenting the various stages by which Protestant Christianity came to establish itself as a religion among the Korean people. It is also convenient when one is attempting to present a historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea with the intent of describing its progressive expansion into a particular geographical locale and its relevant population. It also allows the Korean Protestant historian to relate the historical narratives of Protestant Christianity with the historical experiences of the Korean people by providing a basis upon which to correlate certain events as being relevant to both.

However, a historical narrative that is confined to a chronological format is inadequate for presenting the developmental process of a particular subject within the historical experiences of a particular group. A chronological narrative that follows a linear timeline and compartmentalises the historical narrative according to individual periods can result in over-simplification. It tends to position the narrative regarding a particular topic or element of historical experience simply within the context of a particular period and then proceeds to generalise that experience. This limits the degree to which the subject matter can be scrutinised in depth. Moreover, it is unsuitable for addressing the sometimes subtle and significant changes that occur over time within the historical development of a particular subject, and is unable to present the various internal dynamics and external forces that led to a single subject developing in different ways during different periods of history. The five histories by the Korean Protestant Christian historians, unfortunately, display the characteristics of inappropriate simplification and generalisation, particularly with regard to the position of the Korean vernacular Bible in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

A more detailed analysis of the histories describing the two distinct phases of Bible translation in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea reveals subtle, yet significant, changes in the position of Koreans who participated in the translation process. This change is important for assessing the degree to which the Korean participation can be evaluated as being indigenous and pro-active.

The translation of the Bible into Korean during the first phase is recorded as having first begun in Manchuria under the initiative and direction of John Ross, a

missionary to China sent from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.[255] Another historical account of Bible translation that can be categorised as belonging to the first phase is the work done by Lee, Su-jeong, a Korean scholar who translated the Bible into Korean while in Japan.[256]

In each of the narratives dealing with both the translation of the Bible in Manchuria and Japan the Korean Protestant historian attempts to present ample evidence of the contribution made by the Koreans who were involved. The emphasis on the Korean participation and contribution to the work of translation that occurred in Manchuria is elaborated in much detail and includes the names of many individuals, as well as details of their exploits. For example, the names of Lee, Eung-chan, Lee, Seong-ha, Seo, Sang-ryun and Paik, Hong-jun appear in all five histories. Much is made about their being from the north-western area of Korea and also of their social background as merchants. The historians actively attempt to lead the reader to assume a causal connection between the indigenous, subjective and pro-active participation of these individuals and the popularity, receptiveness and relative success of Protestant missionary efforts among the north-western Koreans during the latter periods of direct engagement by Western missionaries.[257] This would seem to be a reflection of the fact that Protestant Christianity was strongest in the north-western regions of Korea during much of its earlier history all the way up to 1948 when many Christians in northern Korea chose to migrate to the South of the 38th Parallel. By presenting a narrative that links the contribution by Koreans from the north-west to the translation of the Korean Bible the Korean Protestant historian implies a historical connection between it and the subsequent prominence and

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[255] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.51-5; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.168-72; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.142-56; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.297-307; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.70-1. However, there are differing accounts of when the actual work of translation was begun by Ross. Min, Gyeong-bae states that "the work of translation had actually begun from 1875" while the Institute gives a much later date stating "translation work took place from 1877 until 1886." Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.168; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.146.

[256] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.79-80; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.166-7; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1., pp.162-6; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1., pp.318-26; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa.*, p.72.

[257] However, objections to this view are raised by Elizabeth Underwood who observes that "these beginnings of the spread of Protestantism in northern Korea, though of critical importance to the growth of the Protestant church, had little impact on conditions in Seoul or on the official Korean response to either Protestant Christianity or the United States. Protestant contacts in Japan, in contrast, had more immediate ramifications." Elizabeth Underwood, *Challenged Identities – North American Missions in Korea, 1884-1934* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society – Korea Branch, 2004), p.63.

strength of Protestant Christianity in north-western Korea. Both are presented as evidence of the indigenous and pro-active receptivity of the Koreans toward Protestantism. Therefore, historically, the Korean contribution to and participation in translating the Bible into the Korean vernacular is presented as contributing to building a firm foundation during the initial stages of exposure for an indigenous and pro-active appropriation of Protestantism by the Koreans.

The attempt to present a historical causal relation between Korean participation in Bible translation and the indigenous and pro-active appropriation of Protestantism by Koreans can also be seen in the narratives depicting the work of Lee, Su-jeong in Japan. All five of the histories provide detailed biographies of Lee. L. George Paik describes Lee as "Rijutei . . . a senior and a leader" of many students who had crossed to Japan for studies and "a man of high rank in Korea."[258] However, Paik's evaluation of Lee seems to be less than positive. According to Paik, "in order to save his head during the restoration of the Taewongun in 1882, he had fled to Japan."[259] A somewhat different depiction of his character is provided in Min's history. Min describes Lee, Su-jeong as a former official of the Foreign Office who had accompanied Park, Young-hyo, the head of a Korean delegation sent to Japan after the militant uprising of the old army in 1882, as an unofficial member of the entourage.[260] The Institute describes him as

> a *yangban* literati who belonged to the group advocating a moderate enlightenment of Korea. He was granted status as an unofficial attendant to Park, Young-hyo and allowed to travel to Japan as part of his retinue for his service in saving the life of the Queen during the Military Rebellion of 1882.[261]

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[258] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.78.

[259] *Ibid.*, pp.78-9.

[260] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.165; a similar description is presented in Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.72.

[261] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.157.

Interestingly, the depiction of Lee's social status reaches a new high in the history of Park, Yong-gyu when he describes Lee as "a close friend of the King and a near relative who had a personal friendship with Min, Young-ik."[262]

Lee, Su-jeong is important in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea for two key reasons. Both are well documented in the histories by the Korean Protestant historians. The first important role that Lee performed was in the translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular. Unlike the histories detailing the translation of the Bible in Manchuria the narratives describing Lee's work hardly mention the presence of missionaries in the translation process. It appears, at least from the narratives presented by the Korean Protestant historians, as if Lee had translated the Bibles single-handedly. Of course, the fact that he initially engaged in preparing a translation that only added Korean grammatical particles to existing Chinese versions of the Bible could imply that he was able to engage the work without external support from the missionaries.[263]

A comparative analysis of the five histories reveals subtle differences within the narratives surrounding Lee's work in Japan. However, they share a common characteristic in that all five Korean Protestant historians base their narratives on the writings of W.D. Reynolds, an American missionary to Korea. The bulk of their information comes from the several articles that Reynolds wrote concerning the history of Bible translation in Korea, which were published in the *Korean Mission Field* during the 1930s. The individual writing these articles was not directly involved with the work of Lee, Su-jeong in Japan, nor did he actually meet him. As such, they are primarily reconstructions of history prepared by an American missionary for fellow missionaries and the readership back in America. These articles served to provide more of a commemorative recollection of past events and were intended as part of the celebrations to mark fifty years of mission work in Korea by the American missionaries.

That said, the practice of the Korean Protestant historians to simply re-organize the contents of these articles into their historical narratives reflects a significant recurring characteristic of Korean Protestant historical studies. The Korean

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[262] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.307-8.

[263] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.79; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.166-7; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.163-6; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.319; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.72.

Protestant historian chooses to simplistically rely on the materials of a single missionary as their authoritative source for describing and interpreting a particular historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This results in an uncritical reproduction of a 'traditionalised' historical narrative which is not substantiated by an adequate corroboration of source materials but simply takes existing histories, which are in the end secondary or even tertiary sources, at face value. Even when we take into consideration the argument that primary sources pertaining to the earlier periods of mission activities in Korea are scarce and limited, this does not excuse the historian from the responsibility of revisiting the sources available and attempting to engage in an authentic re-interpretation and re-construction of events that can lead to discoveries which would enable a different description and interpretation of the historical experience in question. That the Korean Protestant historian does not attempt to either identify new sources of information or engage in critical review of existing material would seem to reflect a strong attitude of complacency and self-satisfaction in reproducing the 'traditionalised' historical narrative and thereby strengthening an existing historically formulated self-identity of Korean Protestant Christianity which reflects hagiographic intentions.

Another important role that Lee performed was in issuing a special petition and invitation to Western missionaries to come to Korea. The Korean Protestant historians have come to refer to this as Korea's "Macedonian calling."[264] They argue that such indigenous and pro-active efforts on the part of Koreans promoted the potential that Korea had as a mission field. Some even go so far as to present this petition and invitation directed toward the Western missionaries as evidence of Korean Protestant nationalism in that Lee, Su-jeong chose to seek direct missionary intervention from the West rather than the Japanese, the nation's irreconcilable foe. Others have argued that this was because Lee wished for Korea to experience first-hand the modern technologies and institutional benefits of direct interaction with the West. The Korean Protestant historian interprets Lee's fixation on Westerners coming to Korea as proof that he thought direct relations to be better than an indirect introduction of Western social, cultural and political methods through Japan.[265]

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[264] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.79; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.167; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.160-1; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.320-6; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.72.

[265] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.160.

Ultimately, the activities of Lee, Su-jeong are summarised as having laid the foundation for the appointment, entry, and establishment of Protestant missionaries in Korea.[266]

The important significance that the translation of the Bible into Korean by Lee, Su-jeong is perceived as having in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea is that it was this translation of the Gospel of Mark that the first Western missionaries who came to Korea carried with them. That a Korean vernacular translation of the Bible, albeit only a portion of it, existed before the advent of Western missionaries is heralded as being a singularly unique event in the history of Protestant missions. The fact that a Korean was instrumental in bringing about this translation is also highlighted as evidence proving the hand of Providence on the one hand and the foundation for an indigenous and pro-active Korean Protestant Christianity on the other.

The narratives describing the second phase of Bible translation also contain accounts of a Korean contribution to the work. However, the emphasis on the Korean contribution is remarkably different from that of the first phase. For example, L. George Paik fails to present a single Korean name which was included as a member when the missionaries in Korea agreed to "form themselves into a committee for the purpose of translating or supervising the translation of the Bible into the Korean language."[267] The lack of elaboration of the Korean contribution in the translation of the Bible during the second phase can also be found in the histories of Min, Gyeong-bae,[268] the Institute,[269] Park, Yong-gyu[270] and Kim, Young-jae.[271]

From reading the narratives regarding the second phase of Bible translation it would appear as if the indigenous and pro-active initiative of the earliest Korean converts to Protestantism had all but disappeared. The membership of the Bible Translation Committee, which underwent various degrees of structural change from its inception in 1887, was comprised of Western missionaries. The missionaries

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[266] Elaboration on this interpretation is strongest in Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.324-6.

[267] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.150.

[268] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.255.

[269] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.199-202.

[270] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.557-92

[271] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.88.

alone held the authority of appointing individuals as translators. When we further consider the manner in which the Permanent Executive Bible Committee came to decide whether a translation was adequate to be labelled "an official translation," the evaporation of an indigenous and pro-active Korean contribution becomes all the more vivid. The Institute states that "the process of Bible translation was completed when the Board of Official Translators read each verse and after discussion voted unanimously to accept it."[272] Park, Yong-gyu provides a slightly more elaborated account.

> In a meeting of all the official translators the Secretary or another person who had participated in the translation would read the manuscript verse by verse. A period of discussion would follow with a vote taken at the end. Throughout this process the verse read from the manuscript would be adopted if there were no objections. However, if there was even one objection another period of discussion ensued after which a vote was held and the majority option was taken. Although the Koreans who assisted the official translators could participate in the meetings and freely give their opinions they did not possess the right to vote.[273]

It would seem from the above that the initiative as well as the actual work of translating the Bible into the Korean vernacular was held by and limited to the authority of the missionaries. Although there were Koreans who supported the work of translation their role seems to have been strictly limited to that of assistants. In this respect, there appears to be a stark contrast in the degree of indigenous input and contribution in the process of translation that the Koreans were able to assert between the first and second phases of translation.[274]

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[272] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.200.

[273] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.561.

[274] Regarding the formation of a Permanent Executive Bible Committee by resident missionaries in Korea that occurred in 1887, missionary records describe how it not only advised but also controlled the translation of the contents of the Bible "through a Board of Translators elected by them." They also directed the printing and circulation of the Bible. This would imply that not only the translation of the Bible but its dissemination was controlled and regulated by the missionaries. See, Lillias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea – Being an Intimate Record of the Life and Work of the Rev. H.G. Underwood, D.D., LL.D., for Thirty-one Years a Missionary of the Presbyterian Board in Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), p.47.

The dramatic shift in the primary agents of translation that took place in the second phase of Bible translation would seem to indicate that the Korean vernacular Bible widely utilised in Korea was actually the product of the missionaries. This in turn would mean that the degree of indigeneity of the Korean vernacular Bible is far less than it first appears. Although this does not diminish the fact that there were translations of the Korean vernacular Bible before the arrival of Western missionaries in Korea, this alone cannot sufficiently sustain an argument for the Korean vernacular Bible being the embodiment of Korean indigeneity and pro-activeness toward Protestantism. The fact that the actual translation that was widely used in Korea and which was recognised as the official Korean Authorized Version was the product of missionary endeavours would seem to present us with sufficient grounds to question the degree of "pro-activeness" regarding the historic role of the Bible and the development of Korean Protestant Christianity.

The degree of Korean input in the translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular is further cast in doubt when we consider the process by which the missionaries came to decide upon the terminology used in translation. Within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by the Korean Protestant historians there is a tendency to elaborate simply on the debate surrounding the choice of the term *Hananim* to designate the Protestant Christian God, Jehovah. What is often referred to as "the Term question" is often regarded as symbolising the degree of compatibility that Korean religiosity had with Protestant Christianity. It is interesting to note that this term is regarded by the Protestants in Korea as expressing the indigenous character of Korean Protestant Christianity.

The interesting point is that the Korean Protestant historians go to great lengths to depict the religious establishment of Korea before Protestantism's arrival as having been morally deplorable and spiritually dysfunctional. They even went so far as to state that Korea and the Koreans existed in a religious vacuum. Yet, the appropriation of the term *Hananim* in the five historical narratives in relation to the translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular heralds the designation of this term as embodying the competence and resilience of Korean religiosity.

More problematic is the fact that the Korean Protestant historians singularly fail to adequately recognise that the appropriation of this term and the decision to employ it in the translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular stemmed from the non-

indigenous influences of the missionaries.[275] For example, J.S. Gale remarks that "t would seem as though Korea had fallen within the circle of prophetic vision when we consider the marked preparation she has shown for the coming of the Word of God."[276] The basis of this comment was his recognition that "the Korean name *Hananim*, brings us into accord with those who use *Chon-ju*, so that today we can claim union in our appreciation of the wonderful appellative by which Korea stood ready to welcome the coming of the Bible."[277] In a similar vein, John Ross refers to his discovery of the existence of the term, *Hananim*, as providing the translators of the Bible with a uniform term with universal usage that would enable them to sidestep "unseemly squabbles which occurred long ago among Chinese missionaries on this subject."[278]

However, the resident missionaries in Korea, initially, did not share his enthusiasm for using the term *Hananim* in their Bible translations. The earlier translations of the Bible in Korean utilised both, *Cheonju* and *Hananim*. It was only in 1906 when the Authorized New Testament was first published that the term was unified and *Hananim* used as the term for the Christian God. Coming to this agreement amongst the missionaries was no easy task.[279]

Interestingly, a description of the debate surrounding the appropriation of the term *Hananim* is not included in the history of Min or that of the Institute. It seems ironic that the two histories which portray themselves as attempting a 'nationalist' description and interpretation of Protestant Christian history in Korea should omit

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[275] Spencer J. Palmer argues that the strong influence of Shamanism throughout the religious history of Korea meant that "regardless of institutional attachment" the Korean people were aware that "above all the spirits stood one supreme ruler named *Hananim*." Therefore, the Koreans "regarded *Hananim* as the celestial God of the Heavenly Kingdom" who had "sent sunlight, struck the wicked with lightning, or visited other punishments upon them, and rewarded the good according to their merits." In addition, the "Koreans believed they lived and breathed" by his favour. The existence of a religious concept that seemed to embody all of the traits of the Christian God was not lost on the missionaries. In this single term the missionaries discovered the key cultural and religious point of contact which would allow them to gain entry to the religious psyche of the Korean people. See, Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity – The Problem of Identification with Tradition* (Seoul: Hollym Corporation, 1967), pp.3-18.

[276] James S. Gale, "Korea's Preparation for the Bible", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (March, 1912), pp.86-7. This article is reprinted with the same title in *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol.X, No.1 (January, 1914), pp.4-6.

[277] *Ibid.*, p.87.

[278] John Ross, *History of Corea* (London: Elliot Stock, 1891), p.355.

[279] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.352-3.

what could arguably be the first instance of attempting an indigenous expression of the Christian faith. Although the fact this argument was largely limited to and decided upon by the missionaries could explain why they may not regard this as being 'nationalistic' in character. However, it could also be indicative of the manner in which they understand and apply the perspective of 'nationalism' in their histories as well as its implicit and discrete political orientation.

Historically, the missionaries referred to the differences of opinion regarding which term would be most appropriate for conveying the concept of the Christian God, Jehovah, as the 'term question.' The arguments related to the appropriation of *Hananim* by the missionaries are described in various publications. Often cited are those that appear in the article by James S. Gale in the *Korea Mission Field*, "Korea's Preparation for the Bible". In this article he notes five specific attributes that he recognises as having contributed to the prominence of the Bible in Korea. Of these two are related to the term *Hananim* and its religious function. Gale interprets *Hananim* as meaning "The One Great One, the Supreme and Absolute Being." He claims that the Korean *Hananim* "strikes at once a note to which other names labour to attain and arrive at only after a lengthy period of service." Gale also appeals to the various usages to which the term *Hananim* was applied in the religious experiences of the Korean people as justification of supporting the use of the term to portray the Christian God, Jehovah.[280]

Park further describes three conflicting perspectives among the missionaries.

> The first group argued for the term *Hanulnim*, which they regarded as being the most prominent of all gods worshipped by the Korean people. However, they also argued that the use of the term must be accompanied by the teaching of the missionaries regarding the differences between the generalized gods Koreans worshipped and the monotheistic God of Christianity. Another group advocated the use of the term Jehovah in its phonetic form without any attempt at translation. They argued against an attempt to appropriate a heathen religious reference in expressing the personal, eternal and only God. They felt that this would be contrary to

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[280] James S. Gale, "Korea's Preparation for the Bible", pp.86-7.

> the orthodox spirit and Biblical concepts of monotheism. The third group, which comprised the majority of the missionaries, argued for the appropriation of the term *Hananim* as a translation of Jehova. The majority of Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries supported this perspective. They felt that the concept of *Hananim*, as the Heavenly god, also contained a conceptual basis which was compatible with the Christian concept of a monotheistic God. In the end, this last perspective prevailed and it was adopted as the official position of the missionaries.[281]

In relation to how a consensus finally came to be formed around the term *Hananim* Lilias Underwood presents an interesting defence of her husband, Horace G. Underwood, in the debate when she attempts to differentiate between "name" and "term". At first, Underwood advocated the use of the term Jehovah rather than attempting to appropriate a term with religious connotations that might distract the Koreans from the God of the Christian Gospel. According to Lilias, her husband's argument was that

> the use of the *name* of any one of their [native] gods implies the possibility of other deities, but a generic *term* may be so used as to exclude all others. (Our word "God" is really not so much a name as a term.) ... In the Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages there are no capital letters, no articles by which one can say 'the' God; there must be a specific *term* which will designate accurately in the absence of these. A *name* other than His own seems almost an insult to Jehovah.[282]

However, Underwood eventually came to renounce his previous position and accept that *Hananim* was the most suitable term to be had. Lilias explains his "conversion experience" as follows:

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[281] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.582-4.

[282] Lilias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, pp.124-5. Italics in original.

> in delving into books on Chinese and early Korean religions, he found that, at a time when only one god was worshipped in the Kingdom of *Kokurei* [Goguryeo] (part of early Korea), that god was called *Hananim*; the word was a descriptive *term*, signifying the great and *only* One.[283]

As a result, "in the light of these discoveries he felt it was entirely consistent to use the word he had formerly rejected, and he did so the more readily because he found there were serious difficulties attending the use of every word yet proposed."[284]

In spite of such protracted debate and the seeming settlement on the use of the term it was not a decision which was made with complete satisfaction. As Alex A. Pieters notes, "in the absence of a Korean word for God, Hananim has been employed as the nearest approach to it." However, this did not eliminate the problematic issue of how to translate verses in the Old Testament in which "we often come across the words "gods", denoting all the material objects of heathen worship. To translate "gods" by *hananim-deul*, "the honourable heavens", would have been nonsensical." As a result, the missionaries had to settle "with much hesitancy" on the word "*shin-deul*, "spirits" ... as a last resort."[285] The missionaries further discovered that many words "with pagan ideas had to be converted and baptized" before they could be appropriated for use in the translation of the Bible. In some instances, the concepts that the translations were meant to convey were difficult to express, such as "love" which, for the Koreans, indicated "the feeling of a superior for an inferior, so that though God might "love" us, we could not be said to "love" God." Some words, such as "'atonement, 'justification', etc. had to be coined by combining certain Chinese characters or making a circumlocution in the vernacular."[286]

The above examples on how certain terms came to be used and appropriated in the translation of the Korean Bible aptly describes how the process of Bible

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[283] *Ibid.*, p.126.

[284] *Ibid.*

[285] Alex A. Pieters, "Notes on Old Testament Revision", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 5 (May, 1940), p.79.

[286] W.D. Reynolds, "Early Bible Translation", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XXVI, No. 9 (September, 1930), p.189.

translation was a project dominated and regulated by the missionary rather than the indigenous Korean Protestants.

## 4. Bible Translation, An Integral Component of Mission Strategy and Policy

As the events surrounding the process of establishing a committee for Bible translation and the issue of terminology clearly show, the act of translating the Bible into the Korean vernacular language was little different from other regions where Protestantism had been propagated. "From the beginning of the Church, as it spread out from the Eastern Mediterranean, its expansion has been paralleled by Bible translation."[287] Indeed, throughout the history of Christian expansion there have been instances where "translation preceded and perhaps stimulated the planting of a new church."[288] The genesis of Protestant Christianity in Korea can be said to fall into this category. However, the act of translating the Bible into the vernacular was never seen as being a special project independent of any other. It was, in many more instances, "simply understood as necessary to the life of the church."[289]

For example, although much is made about the fact that John Ross translated the Bible into Korean while serving as a missionary to China, the Korean Protestant historian conveniently overlooks the fact that this work received financial and administrative support through various channels as part of an integrated mission policy. In addition to financial support for missionary activities, the Western Protestant Christians were not shy about utilising the political powers of their home countries to further their interests and widen their fields of missionary endeavour. For instance, when the Foreign Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church learned that the British government was undertaking treaty negotiations with the Korean government they actively sought the support of their government to "secure to those travelling in Korea, and those professing or teaching the Christian religion

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[287] Philip C. Stine, ed., *Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church – The Last 200 Years* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), p.vii.

[288] *Ibid.*

[289] *Ibid.*

the protection and privileges" contained in Lord Elgin's Treaty of 1858 with China. Through such actions the United Presbyterian Church sought to enable the legal foundation which would allow "an interesting country" to be "opened up to the advance of the missionary."[290] By petitioning the government the Board was attempting to gain a point of entry which would allow either their missionaries or those of other agencies to engage in direct mission work among the Korean people.

Even before Korea entered into treaty relations with Great Britain much was being done by mission societies of British origin to facilitate an indirect entrance to Korea through the medium of Bible translation. The contributions of a much over-looked individual, Alexander Williamson, were instrumental in ensuring that the mission policies of the United Presbyterian Church extended their influence to include Korea. The interest for incorporating the work related to Korea with the general mission activities being developed in Manchuria was also shared by the very missionaries who had given much of their time and energy in translating the Bible into Korean. John Macintyre, writing in a letter published in the *United Presbyterian Missionary Record* for January 1885, declares that "Corea is opened, and giving us a cordial welcome."[291] Urging his Church Board to adopt a more active development of policy toward missionary enterprise in Korea he confidently states that "were I to enter Corea, say next year, I should do so in the free use of the Corean tongue. It so happens that my teacher, lately baptised by Mr. Ross, is a man from the capital, and I shall thus be qualified for residence there – if need be." But even if the United Presbyterian Church were not to adopt a more forthright policy of direct missionary work Macintyre continued to consider his involvement in the mission work directed toward the Korean people as an integral and inseparable part of his work in Manchuria.

> I shall reside some day on the eastern border, and have a stake both in Manchuria and Corea! ... if ever I am called upon to occupy it I shall have full use of my Corean, and yet be on the Manchurian staff. Or, I may be appointed to the spiritual charge of the Coreans in Manchuria, and settle where my teacher pleads with me to settle ... on the Chinese

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[290] *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, January 1, 1884, p.15.

[291] *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, January 1, 1885, p.10.

> side of the Jaloo River. ... I further entreat that if any rich brother feels moved to commiserate Corea in the matter of the gospel, and if said brother should see fit to allocate money for use there, by all means let the Board bravely accept the money, and ordain that it shall be administered by our Manchurian committee.[292]

For John Macintyre, the development of direct mission work on behalf of the Korean people by the Manchurian staff of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland's Manchuria Committee was not only wholly compatible with its present work but would actually serve to maximize its potential. It is with this conviction that he encourages the Board to "(1) Accept all monies entrusted to us for Corean evangelisation; (2) Encourage our agents there in their present work; (3) Bind them to be loyal to Manchuria, but give them free scope in the formation of Corean congregations." [293] Unfortunately, developments in later years within Korea prevented the United Presbyterian Church from engaging in direct mission work among the Korean people. Be that as it may we must not overlook the important fact that even the work they did manage to conduct during the initial periods of introducing Protestant Christianity to Korea through the medium of Bible translation was done as part of their overall mission policy.

As the above example illustrates, the translation of the Bible was but one part of the overall programme of mission activities envisioned by mission agencies and individual missionaries. This fact becomes all the more clear when we investigate the close and intimate relation between Bible translation and the mission policy of missionaries who were involved in direct resident work in Korea.

Despite the fact that John W. Heron, a physician, had been appointed as the first Presbyterian missionary to Korea in the spring of 1884, it is Horace N. Allen, a missionary belonging to the Board of Foreign Missions for the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, who is regarded as having been the first resident Protestant missionary in Korea.[294] Allen is reported as having arrived "at Chemulpo

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[292] *Ibid.*, p.10.

[293] *Ibid.*, p.11.

[294] L. George Paik explains that Heron, who had expressed his willingness to be appointed to Korea received his commission in the spring of 1884. "However, the board felt that "the time has not yet come for the open proclamation of the Gospel in Corea," and Heron was instructed to go to Japan and

September 20, 1884, and two days later was in Seoul."[295] Although Allen is accorded recognition as the first resident missionary to set foot on Korean soil he did not engage immediately in mission related work. As L. George Paik shows in accounting for the delay in the arrival of John Heron to Korea, the socio-political context in 1882 was still too early for openly engaging in mission activities.

In describing the arrival of Allen, the Korean Protestant historians continue to quote each other and present near identical descriptions. For example, the Institute cites the words of Paik for its description of Allen's arrival in Korea.[296] Whether this is the result of independent verification by the members of the Institute is uncertain. In any event, the uncritical use of secondary accounts in the historical narrative seems to reflect a generalized practice among Korean Protestant historians. Park, on the other hand, bases his account on citations taken from secondary sources written by missionaries.[297] It is interesting to note that Kim presents an almost identical word for word narrative account of Allen's arrival in Korea found in the other histories but fails to provide any references.[298]

The above example appears to represent the Korean Protestant historians' perception and interpretation of this event as an established historical fact which does not require them to verify the accuracy of narratives or the references cited. Rather they seem to simply take the narratives as an established factual account of the historical experience and thus present it without any hesitation or doubt. Such practices further strengthen the argument of this thesis that the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians are simply habitual repetitions of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative rather than an authentic and genuine historical research.

Resident work by western missionaries began in earnest in 1885 when the single foreign missionary was augmented by the arrival of Horace G. Underwood and Henry G. Appenzeller, with William B. Scranton accompanied by his wife and

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there to engage in the study of the Korean language. He delayed and did not reach the field until June, 1885." L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.84-5.

[295] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.86; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.146

[296] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.181.

[297] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.372.

[298] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.76.

mother, Mary F. Scranton arriving not long afterwards. However, even then the work of these missionaries was limited to establishing and developing educational and medical institutions. It was primarily through these institutions that the earliest foreign missionaries encountered the Koreans. As a result, although the earliest period of foreign mission in Korea saw some fruits of missionary labour in the form of converts these were either the results of work already undertaken with Koreans by the Scots in Manchuria and northern Korea or individuals with intimate contacts with the resident missionaries.[299] Nevertheless, the early success of winning converts who were committed to the Christian gospel and amicable to the teachings of the foreign missionaries provided the earliest missionaries to Korea with confidence to engage in more direct forms of mission activity.

The policies that the missionaries to Korea adopted were not the result of thorough prior planning. "The early missionaries entered not knowing how the Koreans would respond to either their presence or the message they brought, nor knowing what their mission policy in this "new field" should or would be."[300] The practice of the mission boards that sent missionaries to foreign fields was one of discouraging "applicants from applying to specific fields, holding for themselves the role of determining to which field an applicant was called."[301] As a result it is more appropriate for us to assume that the mission policies of the resident missionaries evolved with their experience of the Korean context. However, even then the general development and evolution of mission policy did not occur out of thin air. The missionaries tended to develop their policies "in large part in reaction to their assessment of Protestant missions in Japan and China."[302] In addition, "policy decisions were also made in response to varied reactions of Koreans to the missionary presence in Korea."[303]

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[299] The Koreans who were most readily available to the resident missionaries were either their domestic help or their language teachers. It was through them that the resident missionaries learned the language and customs of the people and it was to them that they first bore witness to the Gospel of Christ. See, Martha Huntley, *To Start a Work: The Foundations of Protestant Missions in Korea* (1884-1919) (Seoul: Publishing House, Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1987), p.95.

[300] Elizabeth Underwood, *Challenged Identities*, p.56.

[301] *Ibid.*, p.45.

[302] *Ibid.*, p.56.

[303] *Ibid.*

The reaction to the missionary presence in Korea was varied. Most of the earliest missionaries were resident in Seoul. Seoul, being the capital of the country and the seat of the royal crown, was the locale in Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries where modern inventions and Western notions resulting from the presence of Westerners made their strongest impressions. However, the conditions in Korea at this time were still such that "outside the world of Seoul and the Confucian literati, few Koreans had information on . . . Protestant Christianity."[304] As the missionaries began to explore Korea as a mission field they "passed through areas unaccustomed to any strangers, let alone American Christians."[305] Inevitably, "they met in many places people unsure how to respond to the missionaries."[306]

Within such a context it was the positive response of the King and the court which provided the missionaries with the necessary political and psychological support to continue and even expand their work.[307] It is interesting to note that the positive attitude of the King toward the missionaries is often interpreted as portraying his favourable inclination toward America. The initial interpretation of Protestant missions and their favourable reception as being linked to the missionaries being from America can be found in L. George Paik's history: "We cannot say what might have happened had the first Protestant missionaries been other than American citizens. The nationality of the early missionaries, their cautious activities, their prompt obedience to the law, and their disinterested counsel and sympathy, won the favour of the court and the high esteem of the people."[308]

This sentiment is also echoed in the history of Min, Gyeong-bae. However, his interpretation is situated within what he regards as two different types of Christianity, that of the traditional countries of Europe and that of North America, more specifically the United States. Min regards the Christianity of the first group as representing the model of Christendom Christianity. He evaluates this as being inferior in content and spirituality from that of the North American model, which is not affiliated with any particular political power. In interpreting the historical

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[304] *Ibid.*, p.61.

[305] *Ibid.*, p.69.

[306] *Ibid.*

[307] *Ibid.*, p.70.

[308] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.163.

experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea he regards the former model as unsuccessful in entering Korea because of its close affinity to the colonial enterprise. In contrast he regards the North American model, which does not have any visible or explicit connections with the state, to have been better suited to the Korean context. The fact that this model was embodied in missionaries from America served to strengthen, in his view, the possibility of its acceptance.[309]

Kim, Young-jae states that "the Korean King was favourable to the American missionaries because he regarded them as his friends."[310] However, all of the above interpretations of the King and his attitude toward American missionaries overlook the most important source that led him to adopt such a favourable attitude towards the United States and her people. The source of King Gojong's attitude toward the Americans was obtained through a treatise entitled "A Policy for Korea" (Ch'ao-hsien t'se-lüeh), which was written by a Chinese counsellor of the Chinese legation to Tokyo, Huang Tsun-hsien. In this treatise Huang argued that

> ... in order to create a strong nation Korea must adopt Western institutions and technology, and that to secure itself against Russian aggression Korea should seek to achieve self-strengthening under the umbrella of a foreign policy of close friendship with China, treaty ties with Japan, and diplomatic relations with America.[311]

This influential treatise portrayed the United States as a "country established upon the principles of etiquette and civility." It also described the United States as "a country that has never coveted the land and people of another country or interfered in its political affairs." The strongest argument for entering diplomatic relations with the United States was because "she always helps the weak and maintains justice, thereby preventing the indiscriminate abuse of power."[312] Such favourable depictions of the United States fostered a myth of America's goodness

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[309] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.143.

[310] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.82.

[311] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, p.270.

[312] Ryu, Dae-young, *Gaehwagi Joseon-gwa Migug Seongyosa* (Joseon During the Period of Enlightenment and the American Missionary: Colonial Aggression, Self-empowerment Through Enlightenment, and American Missionaries) (Seoul: Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 2004), p.70.

among the Korean literati with ambitions to modernize their country through enlightenment of Western science and technology from America. When the first American minister to Korea also indicated that America had no colonial ambitions for Korea the King was further led to believe in the myth of America's honesty and trustworthiness, characters that were often ascribed to her being a "Christian" nation. All of these factors influenced the King's attitude toward America and everything connected with it. Hence, the King's immediate appreciation of the presence of Americans in Korea. The fact that they were initially instrumental in developing the educational and medicinal infrastructure of Korea greatly buttressed the King's favourable impression of America and her people.

That these attitudes of the King were founded on a mythical perception of the United States became glaringly apparent only as the Japanese consolidated their control over Korea and finally culminated in the missionaries' acceptance of Korea's abasement as Japan's protectorate and eventually its colony, and the plight of her King and people. Unfortunately, the Korean Protestant historian fails to delve deeper into the historical realities surrounding the particular context of late 19th and early 20th century Korea in which these experiences unfolded. As a result, they fail to adequately appraise not only the King's attitude toward the American missionaries, but also his efforts to foster the independent and sovereign development of his kingdom.

Contrary to the imperialist historiography or the Orientalist depictions of the Westerners uncritically copied by the Korean Protestant Christian histories, King Gojong was instrumental in opening the doors for Western missionaries to enter Korea and conduct their institutional works. The permission that King Gojong gave to Robert Maclay, who visited him in 1884, to begin a school and medical work in Korea[313] was not because he was favourably inclined toward Protestant missions but because he regarded these institutions as beneficial to promoting the modernization of Korea and her people.[314] The basic policy of the Korean government, in dealing

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[313] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.82-3; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.145-6; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.178-9; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.344-8.

[314] See Kim, Do-hyeong, "*Gehang Jeonhu Sirhak-ui Byeonyong-gwa Geunde Gehyeogron*" (The Reinvention of *Sirhak* Ideology and Theories of Modern Reform Before and After Korea's Opening of Ports) in Institute for Korean Studies, Yonsei University ed., *Jeontong-ui Byeonyong-gwa Geunde Gaehyeok* (Reinvention of Traditions and Modern Transformation in Early Modern Korea) (Seoul: Taehagsa, 2004), p.109. Also, refer to the descriptions of how King Gojong came to adopt the policy

with Westerners, was to reject their religious teachings as heretical in contrast to the orthodoxy of neo-Confucianism. However, the government sought to appropriate the technological advances of the West in order to achieve modernisation on their own terms.

The advantages of Western technologies were introduced to Korea as early as 1845 when a book containing details of the geography, history, religion and almanac of various countries was brought to Korea by Kweon, Dae-jeong from his visit to China. Thereafter, in 1872 and again in 1876 government emissaries who visited China and Japan actively encouraged the King and government to adopt a policy of adopting Western technologies. However, their attitude towards Western religion as being evil, heretical and detrimental to the morality and spirituality of the people remained unchanged. King Gojong not only shared this enthusiasm for adopting Western technological advances but also agreed that it was wise to reject its religion. He even went so far as to specifically explicate the two different attitudes that the Koreans should adopt toward Western technology and religion in an Edict issued in 1882.

Therefore, the reason that the Korean government "winked at the prosecution of the missionaries' labour"[315] was not because they were incompetent at policing their laws or because it had become "a dead letter", as nearly all the missionary literature and Korean Protestant histories depict, but because the King had decided that such actions should be tolerated in order to achieve the more noble gain of modernization. The King had to contend with the forces necessitating modernization on the one hand and the dynamics of internal conservatism held by large sectors of Korean society on the other. In essence, an act of political manuevering allowed the King to pursue his project of enlightenment and modernisation, while at the same time protecting his authority from the attack of conservative literati classes who opposed such policies. The positive attitude of the King toward the educational activities of the missionaries and his support of their medical institutions clearly shows that he sought to utilise the

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of Eastern Religion and Western Technology as part of his modernisation project and the role that education played in this policy described in Committee for Korean Historical Studies ed., *Hangugsa* 45 – *Sinmunhwa Undong* 1 (Korean History, Vol. 45 – The New Culture Movement 1) (Seoul: Committee for Korean Historical Studies, 2000), p.17.

[315] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.136; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.246; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.179; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.85; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.552.

services of the missionaries to secure his country's entry into the world of modern nation states.

Although the actual initiation of resident mission work was made possible by the association of missionaries with enlightenment and philanthropic institutions, the earliest missionaries soon developed a policy that sought to concentrate their efforts on direct evangelism and the planting of churches. The favourable reception to the missionary presence in Korea accorded by the King not only gave the earliest resident foreign missionaries a boost in confidence but also emboldened them to engage in direct evangelism. As the activities of the resident missionaries began to gradually shift toward an emphasis on direct evangelism, there followed an in-gathering of Korean converts. The growth in the number of converts presented the missionaries with the challenge of educating and training these Korean Protestant Christians in the basics of Christianity. In order to best engage in this training of the Korean Christians the missionaries needed a reliable religious textbook. For the missionaries, the Bible was regarded as the sole authoritative text for training the new Korean Christians.[316] However, they soon discovered that the version of the Korean Bible translated by Ross and his Korean assistants, and that by Lee, Su-jeong in Japan were both unsuitable for the task at hand. W.D. Reynolds, one of the earlier arrivals to the Korean mission field, remarks that

> The Ross and Rijutei versions were of necessity almost wholly the work of Korean scholars translating from Chinese and Japanese Scriptures, without adequate revision by a foreigner, versed in both the original and Korean. However grateful we must always feel for these pioneer translations, the stilted style, abounding in Chinese derivatives and provincial expressions, with frequent errors, obscure renderings, queer

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[316] The centrality of the Bible in the faith and theology of the earliest missionaries to Korea reflects what can be termed the "evangelical consensus" of the preceding period. The earliest missionaries who came to Korea from the United States shared a common background. The majority of them were from middle class families who were deeply involved in denominational churches. They were trained in schools that were relatively sheltered from the rising influences of secularism penetrating higher education in America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They had also experienced the religious fervour of the Student Volunteer Movement and had consecrated themselves for foreign mission as a result of such religious experimentation. Consequently, these missionaries were bastions of the evangelical consensus centring on the Bible just before the prevailing influence of liberal theologies challenged it with the theories of Biblical criticism.

> spellings and archaic type, caused the early missionaries to resolve to make a new translation rather than waste time patching up the old.[317]

As the above quote shows, Bible translation by the resident missionaries originated from the need to obtain a more suitable Korean Bible with which to engage in their mission work of training and educating the Korean Protestant Christians. As such, the process of translating the Bible was an integral component of their mission practice and was influenced by their mission policy for educating and training Koreans with the Bible as the central textbook.

A prime example of the fact that the translation of the Bible was an integral component of mission policy established by the resident missionaries can be found in the decision taken by the Korea Mission of the Northern Presbyterians in 1890 to adopt a policy that has become known as the Nevius Method.

In conducting a review of this particular historical experience in Protestant Christianity in Korea it is vital to bear in mind that the so called Nevius Method for mission was adopted as a mission policy by the *Northern* Presbyterians. John Nevius, to whom the ideals of this mission policy are attributed, was a Northern Presbyterian missionary in China. There are no records of his having met with the Methodists nor are there any indications that the Methodists expressed any interest in applying his views to their mission policy.

Although the Australian Presbyterian Church was present in Korea in early 1890, one of its first Korean missionaries, Joseph Henry Davies, died in April 1890 after only six months on the field. Not long after his sister who had accompanied him, Mary T. Davies, returned to Australia. The Australians' missionary enterprise in Korea did not begin again until October 1891 when five newly appointed missionaries arrived in Busan.

The fact that the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern Presbyterians) did not arrive in Korea until 1892 and the Presbyterian Church in Canada only arrived in 1898 clearly shows that the adoption of the Nevius Method could not have been a policy decision made by "the Presbyterians." That the Korean

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[317] W.D. Reynolds, "The Contribution of the Bible Societies to the Christianization of Korea", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol.12, No.5 (May, 1916), p.127.

Protestant historian has come to regard this mission policy of a single denominational mission as the dominant and all pervasive mission policy of Protestantism in Korea can be interpreted as reflecting two things. The first is that the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea has been primarily oriented toward the mission policies and practices of the larger denominational missions. Second, it shows that the Korean Protestant historian has failed to identify and employ a method of historical inquiry which would adequately reflect the differences in mission policies and programmes between the various mission agencies that operated in Korea. They have also failed to appropriately analyse and evaluate the influences of these different denominational agencies in the shaping of Korean Protestant Christianity. By simply accepting the 'traditionalised' historical narrative without critical reflection supported by authentic historical research into source materials, the Korean Protestant historian has merely re-presented the historical experience of the powerful, financially, institutionally and numerically.

A further criticism that can be directed toward the Korean Protestant historian's description and interpretation of the Nevius Method and its central practice embodied in the so-called "three self principles" of self-propagation, self-support and self-extension is that they overlook the historicity of this principle in the history of Protestant Christian missionary experience. When we look at the history of mission as it developed in the Western world we discover that "the idea that the objective of missions is to raise up an indigenous church under native leadership"[318] does not originate from John Nevius. Within the history of American foreign missions the ideals contained in the "three self principles" date back to the era of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Paul Harris traces the arguments surrounding "the policies that became known as the Three Self Program" to the theology and practice of Rufus Anderson, who served as the foreign corresponding secretary of the ABCFM during the mid to late 19th century.[319] Harris describes a deputation of the ABCFM that travelled to India in 1855 as having been "a watershed event in the development of the Protestant foreign missionary enterprise" and the "occasion for a forceful and decisive assertion of the policies that

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[318] Paul Harris, "Denominationalism and Democracy: Ecclesiastical Issues Underlying Rufus Anderson's Three Self Program," Wilbert R. Shenk ed., *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914: Theology, Theory, and Policy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), p.61.

[319] *Ibid.*

became known as the Three Self Program."[320] According to Harris, "the program's name derived from the goal of making Protestantism in foreign fields self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, thereby enabling missionaries to finish their work and move on to new fronts."[321] We can also find the ideals espoused in the Three Self Program within the thoughts of Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society who was a contemporary of Rufus Anderson.

The policies that had been taught by John Nevius were appropriated by the missionaries to Korea in a manner that best satisfied their situation. This situation was one in which there was a genuine exponential growth of Korean converts, especially in the northern regions of Korea. However, the limited number of missionaries in the field meant that the missionaries were unable to monitor or train the new Korean converts as well as they would have liked. Therefore, the missionaries adapted the missionary methods espoused by John Nevius so that "itinerating was primarily conducted in order to visit and provide Bible training to churches, and education was provided in Bible training sessions and institutes."[322] In short, the missionaries devised a plan whereby they could maximize their influence among the Korean converts and at the same time hope to maintain a degree of integrity with regard to the quality of their Christian faith. Therefore, according to the practice of the policy "missionaries became the religious educators, supervisors and gate-keepers of the growing Church" while the task of seeking out new converts and bringing them into the Church for education and training was left as "the task of the Korean colporteurs (or Bible sellers) who travelled from town to town."[323]

The individuals who were selected for colporteur duty were charged with the responsibility of telling "all people that in the pages of the Book they had personally found for themselves the good news of God's redeeming love, and that it was good for all humankind."[324] The colporteurs sought not only to tell the tale of the Christian Gospel but to embody it in the manner in which they shared the tale with those whom they encountered. "Their task was to bring to the common people the

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[320] *Ibid.*

[321] *Ibid.*, p.62.

[322] Elizabeth Underwood, *Challenged Identities*, p.221.

[323] *Ibid.*

[324] R.S. Sugirtharajah ed., *The Bible and the Third World – Pre-colonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*, p.142.

'pearl of great price' in a language they could understand, and at a price which they could afford."[325] The individuals who served as colporteurs in the mission field of Korea were ordinary men and women hired by the missionaries and the various Bible Societies in Korea to act "not only as hawkers of the Bible, but also as brokers between the Bible Society and the people who bought the Bible."[326] As such, they were "directed and controlled by the Society's own agents or its missionary friends."[327] Despite the image of the colporteur being an indigenous individual taking the Gospel message contained in the Bible to the remotest villages of his people of his own accord, the entire process of colportage, from deciding which versions of the translated text were published and in what quantity to who would go where and when, was managed and governed according to the policies set by the Bible Societies or the Missions.

## 5. Interpreting and Applying the Bible in Life and Faith

The power and authority of the missionaries over the Korean historical experience of the Christian Bible was not simply limited to its translation and dissemination but also extended to its interpretation and application. The numerous Bible classes that the missionaries organized in the mission compounds were occasions when the proper way to read, interpret, and apply the contents of the Bible were instilled into the minds of the Korean converts, who then went to their peers and parroted the teachings as part of their responsibility as "leaders." Articles in missionary literature abound concerning how the interpretation set forth by the missionaries became the norm for Korean Protestant faith, both within and outside the Church.

In analysing how the Korean Protestant Christians actually appropriated the Bible, the emphasis of study must not simply remain on the numerical statistics of Bible portions, tracts or catechists sold by the various Bible Societies and Missions. It is

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[325] *Ibid.*, p.143.

[326] *Ibid.*, p.140.

[327] *Ibid.*, p.141.

important to understand how the Koreans understood the Bible and how their attitudes toward it, in turn, shaped their understanding of and attitude towards Protestant Christianity. Only when a correlation between the two can be established can we adequately appraise how the Bible functioned in the shaping of a Korean Protestant Christianity.

As we have noted above, the present histories of Protestant Christianity by Korean Protestant historians tend to focus primarily on the historical event of the Bible's translation into Korean and the purported Korean contributions to it. They also tend to emphasise how the dissemination of the translated Bible functioned as the primary, if not the sole, factor which initiated the introduction of Protestant Christianity to Korea and established it as a valid religion among the Korean people. For example, L. George Paik claims that the conversion and baptism of Koreans in "the Korean valleys in northeastern Manchuria" were the result of "the Gospels and tracts which had been sent to them and the personal witness-bearing of one or two converts in Mukden."[328] Similarly, Min, Gyeong-bae asserts that "the Korean vernacular Bible existed before the arrival of Western missionaries in Korea and the Korean was led to the path of Truth by this Bible."[329] The Institute attributes "the establishment of several Christian communities in Manchuria and the Korean peninsula during the early 1880s before the arrival of missionaries" as being the fruit of the efforts by the Korean translators who eventually became colporteurs.[330] The importance of these early Koreans who performed the dual duties of translators and colporteurs is also referred to by Park, Yong-gyu who states that "from the very beginning the Gospel spread among the Korean people through the efforts of their compatriots."[331] In a similar vein Kim, Young-jae attributes the early fruits of missionary activities in Korea to the efforts of the Koreans who "spread the seeds of the Gospel within the borders of Korea."[332]

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[328] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.53-4. This is a quote taken from a report submitted to the Foreign Mission Secretary of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland by the Rev. James Webster of his "tour of the north eastern part of the province" which included a visit to "the Corean colonists in the valleys along the banks of the Yalu" and carried in the October 1, 1885 issue of the *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, p.325.

[329] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.170.

[330] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.152.

[331] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.30.

[332] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.71.

In order to supplement their historical depiction of the Bible's role as a central element crucial to the establishment of Protestant Christianity as a religion of the Korean people, the Korean Protestant historians emphasise the number of Bibles that were sold to the Korean people.[333] However, even these numerical statistics need to be understood, proportionately, within their historical context. For example, the same report by John Y. Crothers which describes the work of the Bible Society's work in Korea and is quoted by Park, Yong-gyu to depict the prominence of the Bible in Korean Protestant Christianity by appealing to numerical statistics describes a somewhat different context in which these sales occurred. Whereas Park simply focuses on the number of copies sold, 6.2 million, Crother makes it clear that this is simply a reflection of sales. He questions whether they were appropriated as a religious text by the Koreans who first purchased them.[334] This implies that the mere sale of Bibles and other religious treatises cannot automatically be equated with acceptance of the Christian Gospel, nor can it be taken for granted that all such copies were read and their religious meaning adequately interpreted. In terms of the degree of coverage that the numerical statistics of sales dictates, Crother states that "if no person had more than one copy, still for each person who had a copy of the Scriptures there would be two people without them."[335] This would seem to suggest that there were instances where one individual procured more than one copy, thereby contributing to the growth in numerical statistics but not necessarily to the further propagation of Protestantism among the Korean people. Additionally, there were campaigns organized by the Bible Societies and the Missions to increase the level of distribution for Bibles and religious tracts. Most notable would be the decision made in 1909 to "publish a special edition of Mark to sell at not more than one *sen*, for use

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[333] L. George Paik states that "the Korean Religious Tract Society was so successful that in its first annual report in 1885 it stated that 890,000 pages of tracts and leaflets had been published at a cost of $1,088." He goes on to quote from the reports of 1886 to state that "32,600 books and tracks were ordered by the Executive Committee during the year to be printed. The custodian reported the sale of 17,654 books and leaflet tracks." *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.246. See also, IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yegosa* 1, pp.280-1. Quoting from an article submitted by John Y. Crothers to *The Korea Mission Field* (1920) Park, Yong-gyu states that "from 1900 to 1918 the British and Foreign Bible Society had distributed 6.2 million copies of the Korean Bible." He also quotes from the statistics supplied by Hugh Miller and presented in Harry A. Rhodes ed., *History of the Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.* to state that during the eighteen years from 1908 to 1925 a total of 9.7 million copies of the Korean Bible were sold to the Korean people. *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.592.

[334] John Y. Crother, "The Distribution of the Bible in Korea in this Century", *The Korea Mission Field* Vol. XVI, No. 3 (March, 1920), p.47.

[335] *Ibid.*

in special evangelistic effort."[336] Crother states that this was done with the express purpose of getting "the Korean Christians to give or sell a copy of Mark's Gospel to their unbelieving friends and others," which they did.[337] However, even this effort to encourage a wider participation by the Korean Christians could not be sustained with the result that "the circulation in 1912 is only slightly larger than in 1908."[338]

As we can see from the above, the Korean Protestant Christians' relationship with the Bible was not as straightforward as generally depicted by the Korean Protestant historians. The degree to which the relational aspect of the Korean Protestant's acclimatization to the Bible was a continuous struggle can also be found in the process by which the Koreans came to eventually read, interpret and apply its contents. In nearly every instance the Koreans looked to the missionaries for guidance on how to read and interpret the contents of the Korean Bible. This dependence of the Koreans upon missionary teaching for interpretation and application of the Bible's contents was also a result of the desire on the part of the missionaries to indoctrinate the Korean Protestants and train them to adhere to their interpretations and maxims of application without question. Consequently, for the Korean Protestant Christians the teachings of the missionaries regarding the Bible became an addendum which retained a startling degree of vigour and tenacity.

As late as 1919, when the Korean Presbyterian Church had attained its structures and entered into a period of so-called self-governance, missionaries cautioned the Korean Protestant leadership from straying from the theological position of the missionaries. In a sermon given before the joint assembly of the three Presbyteries in the Seoncheon area in 1919 Samuel H. Moffett, who was the Eighth Moderator of the Korean Presbyterian Church, urges the Koreans to disown the new theological ideas that were pressing into Korea at the time.

> Should the time come when all the missionaries in Choseon should pass away or return to their homelands and the missionary enterprise be significantly reduced, Brothers! My dear Brothers of the Korean Church! Remain faithful to the Gospel that we had presented to you forty years

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[336] *Ibid.*

[337] *Ibid.*

[338] *Ibid.*

> earlier. ... Persevere in presenting the same Gospel that the early missionaries and the older generation of preachers gave.[339]

This quote can be interpreted as an attempt to warn the Korean Christians against the dangers of new theological ideas that were contrary to the theological perspectives held by the missionaries and taught to the Korean Protestants. It can be viewed as a clarion call to preserve the Church's perceived theological orthodoxy, an orthodoxy that rested upon the unfaltering preservation of the missionaries' teachings. However, even when regarded as embodying the best of intentions, the fact that the missionary could issue such a warning and be confident in having his words heard and acted upon presents us with a startling image of the extent to which missionary influence continued to permeate the Korean Presbyterian Church. This single sermon shows quite clearly that although the structures of polity which gave the semblance of indigenous "ownership" were in place, the Korean Presbyterian Church was far from being a self-governing, much less self-thinking and theologizing Church. Rather, the extent, breadth, and significance of the missionary's influence portrayed in this sermon would seem to indicate that the principle of self-governance was little practiced.

**Conclusion**

As the critical and comparative analysis of the relation between the Bible and Protestant Christianity in Korea detailed above clearly shows, the Korean Protestant historians aggregate round particular aspects of its historical experience. If this tendency to converge on existing themes, which are already well established within existing historical narratives, served to add to the breadth of different depiction and interpretations of the historical experience, then it would be welcomed as contributing to the historical research of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Unfortunately, the five histories presented by the Korean Protestant historians neither

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[339] Sermon viewed in the Korean language from the website of the Worship and Preaching Academy found at <<http://www.wpa.or.kr/academy_bbs/view.asp>> viewed on 26 March, 2007 at 20:26.

present any fresh or insightful research into the subject nor do they provide a new interpretation. Despite the arguments advancing their different historiographies and the claims to amend and append the historical understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea by employing them in their historical studies, they merely present a wearily monotonous repetition of the dominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative. Consequently, the purportedly different historiographies of the Korean Protestant historians coalesce into a single mono-narrative of the Korean Protestant historical experiences relating to the Bible.

The reasons for this are straightforward. In the first instance, this practice of habitual repetition can be regarded as originating from simply frequenting the same sources in their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In certain respects, the recurrence of similar or identical sources in the Korean Protestant historian's research is understandable. The lack of what could be labelled indigenous sources pertaining to the historical experiences of Korean Protestant Christians necessarily requires the historian to delve into primary source materials written by the missionaries. However, this cannot be utilised as an excuse for simply rehashing the same material in historical investigations, as the Korean Protestant historians presently under review do habitually. A more thorough and innovative investigation of missionary sources is necessary so that the 'traditionalised' historical narrative taken to be normative is supplemented where necessary and supplanted as required. Unfortunately, the Korean Protestant historians fail to identify and engage primary or even secondary materials which would present an authentically researched historical narrative of the Bible in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. As a result, they fail to engage in the first step which would allow their different historiographies to contribute to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In relating the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea with the Bible, an attempt to read the historical evidence from a different perspective could have yielded different interpretations, even of identical experiences. Furthermore, a more thorough study of the role, function, and position of the vernacular Bible in the history of Protestant missions would have allowed the Korean Protestant historian to better appreciate the universal nature of the presence of the Bible in Korean Protestant Christianity. This would have led the Korean Protestant historian to present a historical narrative which appreciates the wider missionary context in which Bible translation and dissemination took place in Korea, as well as

more adequately appraising the process by which it came to be appropriated, interpreted, and applied to Protestant Christian life in Korea.

Secondly, the tendency to fixate upon a particular depiction of historical events and their related experiences causes the Korean Protestant historian to simply reiterate existing interpretations. For instance, the Korean Protestant historians focus upon what they refer to as the indigenous contribution and participation in the translation and dissemination of the Bible. However, this fixation leads to a historical narrative that describes the characteristic without regard to the context. It singularly fails to adequately decipher the actual significance of indigenous participation in the role of the vernacular Bible in the formation of a Korean Protestant Christianity. The critical analysis presented above has clearly shown how this tendency distorts the actual process of appropriation, interpretation, and application of the Bible in Protestant Christian life in Korea.

Thirdly, by failing to incorporate their historical investigation of the subject with the wider context in which the particular events unfolded, the Korean Protestant historian overlooks contradictions that appear in their historical narratives. For example, they do not adequately address the role that the missionaries played in the translation, dissemination, appropriation, interpretation, and application of the Bible in Protestant Christian life in Korea. They simply take for granted that the vernacular Bible came into existence through Korean indigenous contribution and participation. They further assume that the motives and actions of the missionaries were entirely innocent and full of good intentions. However, in so doing they fail to recognize that the attitudes which the missionaries adopted and the manner in which they taught and indoctrinated the Korean Protestant Christians reflects their particular theological and doctrinal position, which is itself a product of a particular socio-cultural and religious context.

For instance, in the process of colportage the Bible was presented as the book by which "personal and national rejuvenation" could be attained.[340] The teachings of the Protestant missionaries further intimated that "if one does what the text enjoins, one will conform to biblical Christianity."[341] In other words, the Bible was presented

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[340] R.S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *The Bible and the Third World – Pre-colonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*, p.151.

[341] *Ibid.*, p.153.

and interpreted, simultaneously, as a source of moral rejuvenation for the individual and social renewal for the nation. At the same time, the Bible was appropriated and applied as the single authoritative norm by which orthodoxy was appraised. To this extent, the Bible was appropriated "at the level of the literal, plain and obvious meaning of the text."[342] Therefore, the hermeneutical principle was that "it is the literal sense that conveys the true meaning. It is simply a matter of reading it, finding its true meaning and understanding what it conveys" which leads to an authentic Christian life.[343] Within this hermeneutical structure "there is no acknowledgement that biblical texts might be unclear or contradictory."[344] It takes no account of "complexity and of the mixture of theologies and histories."[345] The missionaries advocated, and the Korean Protestant Christians inevitably accepted that "the text can mean only one thing, and alternative renderings are implausible and even impossible."[346]

This glorified and mystified presentation of the Bible combined with the simplified interpretation of its role in the Christian life formed within the Korean Protestant Christian psyche an indelible impression of the Bible as possessing mythical powers and an aura of other-worldliness. As such, although the Bible was read, the reading of the Bible did not necessarily lead to a further quest in the understanding of God or the Christian Gospel contained within. This lethargy of creative theological inquiry was further fettered by the emphasis upon the literal interpretation of the Bible taught to the Korean Protestant Christians by the missionaries. The practice of literal interpretation, emphasised by the missionaries, stifled any attempt at an indigenous interpretation and application of the Biblical text, and confined the exploration of the Bible in Korean Protestant Christianity to the limitations that were demarcated by the missionaries. Such a psychological and theological barrier has led the Korean Protestant Christians to mistakenly assume that traditionalism and literalism is synonymous with orthodoxy. It has also led to the enslavement of Protestantism to the legacies of the missionary enterprise as the

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[342] *Ibid.*

[343] *Ibid.*

[344] *Ibid.*, p.154.

[345] *Ibid.*

[346] *Ibid.*

Korean Protestant Christians identify preserving the missionary perspectives with persevering in the Christian faith.

Taking the above into consideration, the present five histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians can only be evaluated as serving to further promote and enforce a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-understanding. The Korean Protestant historians continue to habitually repeat the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that dominates the historical understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea, regardless of purported differences in historiographies. Consequently, this leads to the writing of history which merely serves the existing depiction and interpretation of Protestant Christianity in Korea without questioning its motives or challenging its presuppositions. As a result, the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians regarding the Korean vernacular Bible fails to be authentic historical research and simply regurgitates and collapses into habitual repetition.

# Chapter 5 – A Critical and Comparative Analysis of Revivals and Revivalism in the Historical Experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea

## Introduction

The five histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians presently being reviewed in this thesis contain nearly identical narratives regarding the historical experience of revival. This narrative is centred round a specific event which occurred in 1907 in Pyongyang. The Korean Protestant historians describe and interpret this single revival experience as having been the defining moment in the shaping of Korean Protestant Christianity.

However, this uniform emphasis of the 1907 revival experience conveniently overlooks the fact that revival, in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, was not a one time occurrence. It was simply one of numerous religious experiences which are referred to as revivals and great awakenings in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The habitual repetition by the Korean Protestant historians to overly emphasise one particular experience, which occurred within a specific context, weakens the meaning and significance of other similar experiences.

A comparative and critical analysis of the Korean Protestant historians' narratives and interpretations on the subject of revival reveals that, once again, they tend to repeat the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that promotes and supports a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-identity. Despite the alleged differences in the perspective and methodology utilised in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea by the Korean Protestant historians, several interesting questions remain unanswered. In the first instance, do the historical narratives presented by the Korean Protestant historians adequately reflect the historical process of the revival? If the histories do sufficiently reflect the historical experience of revival in Korean Protestant Christianity, how is it possible that the different historians, purportedly utilising different historiographies, present nearly identical narratives on the subject? Do the similarities in the historical narratives concerning revival reflect an unrecognised meta-narrative which functions as a normative

narrative in depicting and interpreting the historical experience of revival in Korean Protestant Christianity? If so, how was this meta-narrative formed and for what purpose? Why has it never been challenged?

At present, the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea conducted by Korean Protestant historians do not adequately raise or attempt to answer the above questions. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to engage in a comparative and critical analysis of the five histories by Korean Protestant historians with these questions in mind. It is our hope that by raising these questions in relation to the historical narratives dealing with revival in Protestant Christianity in Korea we will be able to identify why the Korean Protestant historians revert to a habitual repetition of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative, despite their purported use of different historiographies. We further hope to analyse whether a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-identity has influenced the historian's perspective and method of inquiry. In this way we will attempt to establish whether this has also impacted upon the writing of history, thereby resulting in the 'traditionalised' historical narrative being uncritically replicated in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians.

## 1. Defining the Experience

In attempting to present a historical narrative regarding a particular religious experience, such as revival, it is important for us to establish how the central term has come to establish itself. When we consider the fact that Protestant Christianity was a foreign religion which was propagated by Western missionaries the importance of identifying how the concept of revival was conveyed and received in the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea becomes an important task which the historian must undertake. This is because although the Koreans possessed concepts and terms which referred to specific religious experiences the terminology used for referring to particular Protestant activities and experiences would not have existed in the Korean religious vocabulary before they were introduced by the missionaries. Even in instances where religious activities, such as meditation, prayer, worship and learning from a religious text, were acts that were familiar to the Koreans the

religious concepts that these actions conveyed would have been significantly different from those of Protestantism and, as such, a process of education would have been required for the Koreans to re-learn them through the teaching of the missionaries. The indoctrination and education of religious concepts and terms by the missionaries to their Korean converts not only added new words to the religious vocabulary of the Korean people but also imparted a specific way of understanding and conceptualising particular religious experiences that were first introduced by Protestant Christianity. A prime example is "revival."

In constructing their narratives on the historical experiences of revival in the life of Protestant Christianity in Korea none of the historians attempt to ask the following questions:

> How can anyone chronicle the story of a movement, or analyse its character and influence, without first ascertaining what reporters meant when using words that have since been construed quite differently? ... one must ask what terms were used and from whence they were derived; what did they mean and what did they not convey?[347]

The five histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians presently being reviewed reflect an alarming degree of complacency on the part of the historians. None are concerned with establishing the historical process by which the term revival came to be used to describe a religious experience in the life of Protestant Christianity in Korea and what concepts it was regarded as conveying. The historians simply take for granted that an understanding of the term and its concepts exist and that the term itself possesses a degree of historical consistency. There is no recognition of the fact that the term itself may have undergone profound changes within the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Attempting to present the historical process by which a term was introduced, developed, and appropriated to describe the religious experiences of a particular community is a difficult task. The difficulty is compounded in the historical

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[347] J. Edwin Orr and Richard Owen Roberts,ed., *The Event of the Century – The 1857-1858 Awakening* (Wheaton: International Awakening Press, 1989), p.xi.

investigations of the missionised church because the readily available primary sources of information are predominantly those from missionaries. Nevertheless, these sources allow us to garner insights into how and when the missionaries introduced the term to their native constituents. Furthermore, an investigation into some of the ways in which revival was understood in the missionary's home context can help us better understand what would have been passed on to the Korean Protestant Christians.

J. Edwin Orr, who has studied the history of revivals and revivalism in America, presents a definition of the revival and an accompanying term, revivalism, in the following way: According to Orr, revival, in the traditional sense, is "the act of reviving, or the state of being revived, or restoration to life, the strength, or consciousness." Therefore, the meaning of the term revival and its verb, *revive*, "does not mean "to evangelize," but "to renew" the spiritual life of Christians." Orr gives the historical genesis of the term revival as having "first appeared in 1702, just as a spiritual awakening claimed attention from society." According to his research the term "was then defined not as "an evangelistic effort," but as "a general awakening in (or of) religion"." He further states that revivalism, as a term, was first introduced "in 1815, during the Second General Awakening" and "rendered as "the state (or form) of religion characteristic of revivals," as previously defined, not as *mass evangelism*." In a related development, the term revivalist was used "for any person "who promotes, produces, or participates in a religious revival," and not at all for a professional evangelist." He, therefore, strongly objects to the present practice in American religious establishments that utilise the term revival to describe "an evangelistic service, a gospel meeting, or a week of meetings, especially in the South." For Orr, revival "signified restoration or renewal in the historic sense, never evangelism in the organised way."[348]

Another term that has been used to describe a similar religious experience is "awakening." According to Orr, "the words awakening or great awakening" were used by the Christians of the 1850s "to describe any revival of religion (as defined above) which affected the life of a whole section of the country, or the nation, or of all the countries of a largely evangelical population." Orr describes an awakening as

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[348] J. Edwin Orr and Richard Owen Roberts, ed., *The Event of the Century*, pp.xi-xii. Italics in original.

being "conscious, deliberate, organized attempts to change the culture of a people."[349]

Another scholar refers to revival as a term denoting a particular religious experience that can be used to "refer to a local phenomenon" as well as "a broad popular movement." In the first instance, the term is used to describe "an unusual increase in religious concern and of professed conversions that occurred in a communal setting." However, a revival could also refer to "outbreaks of religious fervour throughout a particular denomination, region, nation, or group of countries over a prolonged period of time."[350]

The Korean term most often used to refer to a revival experience is *buheung*. This is a composite of two Chinese characters *bu* meaning "repeat, once again" and *heung* meaning "to rise, raise up." This term and its concept is similar to what Orr referred to as the traditional sense of revival in the American religious context. The Korean term for a revival gathering that developed from this term is *buheunghoi* with *hoi* meaning "gathering, meeting, society." A revival movement is referred to as *buheung undong*, with the separate word *undong* meaning "a movement or trend."

Another term that can be found in the vocabulary of Korean Protestant Christians is *gagseong undong*. In this instance, *gagseong* means "to be enlightened, to understand" and implies that the participant perceives what is being taught or spoken during the gathering and comes away with a clear understanding of it. This could be regarded as being synonymous with the English term "awakening" with a prefix *dae* (big, great) affixed to denote a "great awakening."

However, the Korean historical experience of religious events also has another term that is not prominent in American religious experiences, the *sagyeonghoi*. This term is a composite of three Chinese characters, or words. The first, *sa* means "to investigate" and *gyeong* which means "religious text" denotes the Christian Bible, while *hoi* means "meeting, gathering, society." The existence of this term to denote a similar religious experience to revival or renewal can be interpreted as stemming from the particular experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea where the teaching of the Bible by the missionaries provided an occasion for revival-like experiences

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[349] *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

[350] Kathryn Teresa Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.9.

among the Koreans.[351] The English documents use the various terms of "Bible Class" or "Theological Class" to describe such gatherings. Research into primary sources written by missionaries shows that they gradually developed a system whereby Bible Classes were organised regularly to educate and indoctrinate the Korean Christians to the basic tenets of Protestant Christianity, with these gatherings also providing an occasion for holding large meetings which sought to give to the Koreans a revival experience.[352]

Research also reveals that the earliest use of the term, revival, was in describing religious experiences where the manifestation of the Spirit of God was prominent. As such, revival referred to the experience of a deep conviction of sin, repentance, and an awareness of forgiveness found in Christ Jesus.[353] However, in later years it came to be used to refer to evangelistic campaigns and various initiatives to stimulate numerical growth. These revival gatherings were centred round particular individuals who were recognised as "revivalists" and accompanied by carefully planned evangelistic campaigns. Consequently, the degree of success of such revivals was measured in the numbers of converts added to the rolls of the churches.[354]

In light of the above we can justly criticise the Korean Protestant historians for habitually repeating the normative narrative without engaging in authentic research

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[351] For example an article in the February 10, 1897 issue of the *Christian Advocate* relates a gathering of fifty Christians who gathered to receive instruction on the Bible from the missionary. An article in the February 15, 1899 of the *Christian Advocate* issue relates how Bible study classes (*sagyeonghoe*) were held in Ganghwa, Songdo, Seoul, Pyongyang, and Samhwa. A similar article can be found in the March 22, 1899 issue of the *Christian Advocate* reporting on a Bible Class in Pyongyang.

[352] As early as 1908 the missionaries considered the period when Bible Classes were regularly convened as being "the season for revival meetings." See, the *Editorial* where reference is made to the winter Bible Classes as being "the season for revival meetings" and encouraging the missionaries to "keep the revival fires burning." "Editorial", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. IV, No. 12 (December, 1908), p.185.

[353] E.M. Cable, "Letter to the Editor", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (March, 1908), p.47; "The Direct Effects of the Revival", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (May, 1908), p.70.

[354] Lillian May Swearer, "The Working of the Spirit in Choong Chung Province", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XI, No. 5 (May, 1915), pp.127-31; Lillian E. Nichols, "Good News from Songdo", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XI, No. 5 (May 1915), pp.132-33; C.N. Weems, "The Revival in the Songdo District – Fifteen Hundred Seekers and Eleven New Groups", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XVI., No. 6 (June, 1920), pp.111-2; J.S. Gale, "The Revival in Seoul", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (January, 1921), pp.4-5; W.J. Anderson, "The Revival in Andong", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (March, 1921), pp.49-50; Harry A. Rhodes, "Some Results of the Kim Ik Tu Revival Meeting in Seoul", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XVII, No. 6 (June, 1921), pp.113-4; W.N. Blair, "The Pyengyang Revival", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. XXV, No. 2 (February, 1929), pp.42-3.

into the historical experience of revival in the life of Protestant Christianity in Korea. As a result, they fail to note the manner in which the term evolved in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea and the changes in the religious concepts that the word revival conveyed during different periods.

## 2. Describing the Experience

For the most part, the Korean Protestant historians concur that the particular religious experience referred to in various forms as "the Revival" took place in 1907 and was centred round the Jangdehyeon Presbyterian Church in Pyongyang. As such, L. George Paik simply refers to the religious event of 1907 as simply "the revival"[355] while Min, Gyeong-bae uses the term "Great Revival of 1907."[356] The Institute uses a similar term, "Great Revival Movement of 1907"[357] while Park, Yong-gyu refers to it as "the Great Revival Movement in Pyongyang"[358] and Kim, Young-jae calls it "the 1907 Revival at the Jangdaehyun Church in Pyongyang."[359]

Apart from the when and where, there is also common consensus of how and why. The Korean Protestant historians all agree that the revival experience of 1907 was the result of religious gatherings which date back as far as a gathering of Methodist missionaries at Wonsan in 1903. They also agree that it was the act of repentance and spiritual awakening experienced by a single individual, R.A.

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[355] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea,* p.370.

[356] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa,* p.264.

[357] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa 1*, p.268.

[358] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.858. Park specifically refers to this experience as a "spiritual revival" thus explicitly marking his interpretation of this event as a revival in term and consequence. Cf. *Ibid.*, p.953.

[359] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.122.

Hardie,[360] which enthused the Protestant Christian community in Korea and provided the incentive for earnestly seeking an infusion of the Holy Spirit.[361]

In terms of describing how the revival experience of 1907 unfolded, the Korean Protestant historians are quite straightforward in their depiction of events. L. George Paik states that the particular religious experience of R.A. Hardie in 1903 "was repeated during a Bible Conference among the missionaries at Wonsan" in 1904.[362] Min, Gyeong-bae describes the religious experience in 1904 as having been shared with Presbyterian missionaries and Korean Christians in Wonsan who joined together in "roaming the streets of Wonsan beating their chests in penitence and proclaiming the gospel."[363] The Institute, referring to this meeting in Wonsan, states that "the joint prayer meeting of the different denominations which was held again in January 1904 saw the Canadian Presbyterian missionary A.F. Robb experience the gift of the Holy Spirit."[364]

In addition to the various religious experiences that occurred in Korea the Korean Protestant historians attempt to present the revival experience of 1907 within a wider global context of revivals occurring in other parts of the world. The revival experiences of Wales in 1904 and India in 1905 are described as having had indirect influence on the 1907 experience that occurred in Korea. Toward this end Min, Gyeong-bae contends that the "acute yearning for a special gift of the Holy Spirit" among the Protestant Christians in Korea resulted from "news of the revivals that had occurred recently in Wales and India."[365] Park, Yong-gyu also elaborates upon the international contribution to this yearning for revival that had occurred within the Protestant Christian community in Korea. He notes two distinct international influences. In the first instance, F. Franson of the Scandinavian Mission in China "suddenly arrived far earlier than expected and remained with Hardie for a week in

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[360] R.A. Hardie is described as "a medical missionary of the Canadian Colleges' Mission" who had severed his relations with that agency in 1898 "and joined the Southern Methodist Mission and engaged in evangelistic work at Wonsan." L George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.367.

[361] *Ibid.*, pp.367-8; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.266; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.268-9; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowehsa* 1, pp.828-32; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.122-3.

[362] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.368.

[363] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.266.

[364] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidogyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.269; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.123.

[365] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.267.

his home in Wonsan." While in Wonsan, Franson "led a series of prayer meetings and Bible studies." As a result of these meetings "which were led by F. Franson every evening for an entire week at the Changjeon Chapel and attended by members from the Presbyterian, Methodist and even Baptist communities the Wonsan spiritual awakening that had started from Hardie's experience was dramatically accelerated."[366]

The enthusiasm of the Korean Protestant Christian community for religious revival was blessed by another visit from an outsider which had prominent effects on flaming the fires of religious fervour. According to Park, Howard Agnew Johnston came to Korea in 1906. He is described as "a member of the Northern Presbyterian Mission Board and a revival preacher" who had come to Korea after "visiting Wales and the mission fields in India."[367] A similar account is presented by Kim, Young-jae who states that "upon hearing Rev. Johnson's report the entire congregation prayed for a similar outpouring of grace upon their church."[368]

As news of the dramatic experience that influenced the Christians in Wonsan spread to the Christian community in Pyongyang "the missionaries of Pyongyang, having heard what had happened in Wonsan, desired to have a Bible Conference, and in August of 1906 invited Dr. Hardie to lead them."[369] The desire of the missionaries in Pyongyang to experience a revival led "the members of both Methodist and Presbyerian missions" to join "in a week of conference for the deepening of their spiritual life."[370] According to Paik, "during the summer and fall the missionaries of Pyongyang continued their prayer meetings and held special meetings for the Korean Christians in the city."[371] These concerted efforts of the missionaries denoted a "conscious effort to bring about a deepening spiritual experience."[372] According to Min, the concerted efforts toward a religious experience were not limited to the missionaries. He describes the "fiery passion of the dawn prayer meetings that were

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[366] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.832-3.

[367] *Ibid.*, p.850.

[368] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.123.

[369] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.368; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.266.

[370] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.368.

[371] *Ibid.*, pp.368-9.

[372] *Ibid.*, p.369.

started for the first time in Korea by the Reverend Gil, Seon-ju" as being "a direct motivation for the great revival."[373] The Institute shares in Min's evaluation of the impact of the dawn prayer meetings and states that "Gil, Seon-ju's leading of the dawn prayer meetings was a foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit's manifestation to come."[374]

The descriptive account of the revival experience provided by Park is perhaps the most exhaustive of all in terms of details offered. He goes to great lengths to describe the numerous prayer meetings and Bible classes held in different parts of Korea in which religious experiences were noted between 1903 and 1907. In his historical description Park constantly refers to the central role played by a select group of individuals and relates their contributions as having been crucial to sustaining and spreading the spirit of revival, eventually culminating in the "great revival experience of Pyongyang."[375] Most notable and oft recurring among these are R.A. Hardie and Gil, Seon-ju. The overall effect of this depiction is to portray the 1907 revival experience as both the natural result of a series of preparatory spiritual experiences and the culmination of religious and spiritual development. Depicting the 1907 revival experience in this way contributes to strengthening the credibility of the interpretation by the Korean Protestant historian that this was the formative experience of Korean Protestant Christianity. At the same time, it strengthens the historical significance of the 1907 revival experience in the life of Protestant Christianity in Korea and adds to its historical standing as one of the most important historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Although the Korean Protestant historians appear to take different routes in describing the revival experience of 1907, some being longer and more elaborate than others, they all reach the same destination, the annual Bible Training Class. It met at Pyongyang at the beginning of January, 1907, more specifically, the "Pyongan-namdo (South Pyongan Province) Male Bible Training Class" that had been organized by "the four Presbyterian missions at Jangdaehyeon Presbyterian Church in Pyongyang from 2nd to 15th January, 1907."[376]

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[373] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.267.

[374] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.270.

[375] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.858.

[376] *Ibid.*, p.859.

This gathering organized by the missionaries was specifically oriented toward training the Korean leaders through Bible study. However, Paik states that the evenings "were entirely devoted to special evangelistic preaching" and it was "at one of these evening sessions" that "the outbreak of the revival took place."[377] Min provides a bit more detail on how the revival began as he describes how "the fire of revival broke out when William N. Blair read from 1 Corinthians 12:27 and preached how we are all members of the one body of Christ."[378] The Institute states that "when the missionary Graham Lee went up to the pulpit and cried "My Father!" the entire congregation experienced the power of the Holy Spirit as if a mighty power had overpowered everyone there."[379]

Once again, Park fills in much of the details surrounding the Bible Training Class and the evening meetings. He states that the evening meetings that had begun on Monday, January 6 continued every evening until "the fateful meeting" of Saturday, January 12.[380] It was in this meeting that William N. Blair is said to have preached on the oneness of the body of Christ from 1 Corinthians. Park maintains that "many who had gathered that evening returned home confident in having received an answer to their prayers [for revival]."[381] It was not until the evening of the following Monday, January the 14th that a powerful religious experience, which Park refers to as "the Korean Pentecost," actually occurred, and continued during the meeting the following evening.[382]

For the Korean Protestant historian it seems that all religious experiences lead to Pyongyang 1907. In spite of the differences in emphasis regarding the various events they seem intent on presenting the revival experience of 1907 in Pyongyang as the foundational religious experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

However, we must ask whether these near identical narratives of this religious experience can truly be justified as authentic historical research or whether, yet again, the Korean Protestant historians are engaging in a habitual repetition of events in

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[377] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.370.

[378] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.267.

[379] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.271; A similar account is presented in Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.125-6.

[380] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.861.

[381] *Ibid.*, p.862.

[382] *Ibid.*, pp.862-82.

order to emphasize a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-identity. Let us attempt to assess this by looking at a subtle, yet significant, discrepancy that occurs within the histories by the Korean Protestant historians.

In commenting upon the Korean participation and contribution Min, Gyeong-bae picks up on the dawn prayer meetings that had been arranged by Gil, Seon-ju. Specifically, Min states that the dawn prayer meetings were "started for the first time in Korea by the Reverend Gil, Seon-ju."[383] The contribution by Gil, Seon-ju is taken up in similar detail by the Institute. Incidently, the Institute refers to Gil as an "Elder who was already making his name known as a revivalist."[384]

The question relating to the credibility of the historical accounts presented by the two historians centres on the issue of whether Gil, Seon-ju was an ordained minister or an elder at the time of the revival experience of 1907. Although the difference in the titles conferred upon a particular individual in historical narratives may appear insignificant to the overall content, this irregularity needs to be investigated further in order to establish whether it is simply a typographical error, a mistake in representation, or whether it embodies a more ominous significance.

It is not difficult to discern Gil, Seon-ju's status as an ordained minister or an elder in the church. Although Gil was a student at the Presbyterian Seminary in Pyongyang he had not completed his studies when the revival experience broke out in January, 1907.[385] Moreover, the Presbyterian missions had not yet established a presbytery through which they could ordain Koreans into the ministry according to Presbyterian practices. The first Presbytery was being formed in September of 1907.[386] Therefore, in light of the above Min is thus incorrect in referring to Gil as "the Reverend Gil, Seon-ju."

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[383] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.267.

[384] *Ibid.*, pp.269-70.

[385] L. George Paik states that "in the year 1901 it [The Council of Missions Holding the Presbyterian Form of Government] established a Union Theological Seminary which instructed the future Korean ministers, and in 1907 the first class of seven was ready for ordination." *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.388. However, Park, Yong-gyu provides evidence that the first graduates from the Presbyterian Seminary in Pyongyang were not awarded their certificates until June of 1907. Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 2 (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 2004), p.37.

[386] The specific date on which a Presbytery was formed is given as September 17, 1907. L. George Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.389; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.285. IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.284; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 2, pp.61-2; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.138. The exact date of the meeting is given as 17 September with the ordination of the seven who had undergone theological training taking place on

This mistake on the part of Min can be regarded as resulting from the historian's excitement and involvement in the narrative. Whether Gil was an elder or an ordained minister can be categorically regarded as being insignificant in contrast to the importance of his actually having played a significant role in stimulating the revival experience of 1907. However, this inattention to detail can also be regarded as dangerous for two reasons. First, it displays the possibility of the historian reading certain facts into his narrative in order to accentuate their significance and promote his subjective interpretation of events. By portraying the individual in a role that is not historically supported by the evidence, the historian distorts the scope of the individual's influence in that particular experience. There is a great difference in referring to Gil as an elder or an ordained minister in the narrative account of the revival experience. In the first instance, referring to him as an ordained minister would presuppose that there had been an ecclesiastical structure. It would also presuppose that this ecclesiastical structure had incorporated a certain degree of indigeneity in which Koreans were participating in the ministry of the Church on a level equal to or approaching that of the missionaries. Unfortunately, the subsequent accounts presented by Min and the other Korean Protestant historians contradict these presuppositions and negate their prospects of being established as historical facts. Each of the five histories presents a narrative account of the establishment of ecclesiastical structures as having occurred after the revival experience of 1907. Even Min acknowledges that "for the Presbyterians this revival experience provided the crucial opportunity for organising their church structure."[387]

Referring to Gil, Seon-ju as an elder substantially weakens the Korean indigenous aspect of the revival experience. True, it does not detract from the historical fact that the dawn prayer meetings were instigated by Gil on his own initiative. Nor does it lessen his prominence as an important leader and figure in the revival experience of 1907. However, the fact that he was an elder in the Presbyterian ecclesiastical structure also entails that he received the oversight and direction of an ordained minister. In this instance all the ordained ministers were missionaries. The fact that the dawn prayer meetings were allowed to continue and influence the Korean Christians can be regarded as reflecting a decision on the part

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the evening of this first day. "The Presbytery of Korea," *The Korea Mission Field* Vol.3, No.11 (November 1907), pp.161-2.

[387] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.284.

of the missionaries to allow such gatherings to take place. It would, in fact, intimate that the missionaries sought to encourage the Koreans to pray for a revival experience, much like they had been doing. It would also seem to indicate that the prayer meetings that had been taking place in the various gatherings of the missionaries had influenced the Koreans and thus led them to initiate a prayer meeting of their own accord. This would seem to signify that the missionaries regarded such gatherings as contributing rather than harming their overall efforts for religious revival. As such, although the dawn prayer meetings did possess an indigenous characteristic this must be recognised as having occurred within the overall discretion and leadership of the missionaries.

A second danger of this inattention to detail is that it imperils the credibility of the historian's overall narrative regarding the revival experience of 1907. If the heat of the moment in describing the religious experience led the historian to inaccurately depict an important individual and credit his role with more recognition than it entailed other discrepencies might exist. It is difficult to determine the culpability of the historian and whether such discrepancies were intentional. However, in light of the fact that they occur within what appears to be a normative narrative account of the religious experience of revival which occurred in 1907 the possibility of the historian attempting to prejudice his narrative in support of a particular Korean Protestant Christian experience seems all the more likely.

### 3. Interpreting the Experience

In interpreting the particular religious experience collectively referred to as the Revival of 1907, the Korean Protestant historians tend to identically focus on the same aspects of the historical event. These are, in turn, uniformly interpreted as having provided the religious foundation upon which Korean Protestant Christianity was established. The residual practices of the revival experience are also regarded as forming the basic tenets of Korean Protestant Christianity that have endured over the years and contributed to the shaping of a particular Korean Protestant Christian self-identity.

The first of the results that the Korean Protestant historians note is "a better understanding between Koreans and missionaries."[388] The revival experience of 1907 in Pyongyang is regarded as having been the threshold that broke down the racial prejudice of the missionaries and Koreans alike. On the one hand "the missionaries generally took a superior attitude toward the Koreans and felt they were different from them."[389] In spite of their interest in the spiritual welfare of the Korean people the missionaries could not wholly escape "a feeling of racial superiority" over their Korean converts.[390] The Koreans tended to regard the missionaries as superior in every way, conveying progressive and modern ideas as well as embodying the superior Western culture that Koreans regarded as more enlightened and advanced. Therefore, the Koreans adopted a subservient attitude toward the Western missionaries that reflected the long tradition of deference toward the more enlightened and powerful which had characterized Korean attitudes toward China.

The revival experience of 1907 is regarded by the Korean Protestant historians as the single event which helped to teach the missionaries that "the Korean is at heart, and in all fundamental things, at one with his brother of the West."[391] It is also regarded as having helped the Koreans to realise that the missionaries were also frail and finite human beings who shared in all the weaknesses that they experienced.[392] This mutual recognition of the other as equal is interpreted by the Korean Protestant historians as having laid the foundation for the future cooperation between missionaries and Koreans in the various organisations and ecclesiastical courts that were set up in subsequent years.

However, a careful reading of the materials written by the missionaries regarding their re-evaluation of the Korean people in light of the revival experience of 1907 compels us to question this degree of camaraderie that the Korean Protestant historians is so intent on emphasising. Primary sources clearly reveal that the

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[388] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.373; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.279; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.273-4; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.976; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.128.

[389] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.375.

[390] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.273.

[391] J. Z. Moore, "The Great Revival Year," *The Korea Mission Field*, vol. 3, no.8 (August, 1907) p.118.

[392] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-yu Yeogsa* 1, p.273.

greatest appreciation of the revival experience of 1907 from the missionary point of view was that "the revival brought upon the heart of the church a deep impression of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of the everlasting obligations of righteousness."[393] This was important because it revealed the extent to which the missionaries had been successful in their education and indoctrination of the Korean Christians. The missionaries were concerned that "among a people like the Koreans there is no definite and clear idea of the true and terrible character of sin."[394] As such, they were unsure whether the Koreans had adequately grasped "the knowledge of righteousness and of sin" which was a religious concept that was "new to the Koreans."[395] Consequently, the revival experience of 1907 showed that the Koreans can also be truly converted to the Christian Gospel and experience inner renewal through the working of the Holy Spirit. However, it is questionable whether it altered the perception of the missionaries that the Korean Christians still required the guidance and oversight in their religious activities. The fact that the positions of Moderator and Treasurer of the earliest ecclesiastical courts were filled by missionaries for a substantial period afterwards begs the question of whether the missionaries truly did regard the Korean Christians as their peers and equals as a result of the revival experience of 1907.

A second influential result of the revival experience noted by the Korean Protestant historians is the significant change in the moral character of the Korean Protestant Christians. The Korean Protestant historians provide detailed accounts of how the Korean Christians were stirred to contrition regarding their moral faults and publicly confessed their sins and engaged in direct retribution for their past wrongs as a result of the revival experience.[396] This deeply religious experience and the visual changes in attitudes and lifestyles that resulted from it shocked many of the missionaries who witnessed the level of repentance and retribution enacted by the Koreans. It also led the missionaries to firmly believe that their efforts to elicit a

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[393] "The Direct Effects of the Revival", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (May, 1908), p.70.

[394] "The Cry of the Church", *The Korea Mission Field*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (April, 1908), p.62.

[395] "The Direct Effects of the Revival", p.70

[396] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.370-1; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.268-9; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.271-2; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.863-4, 875-81, 959; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.125-6.

spiritual experience were both successful and timely in bringing about a true renewal of the Korean Christians.

Inevitably, this renewed moral character of the Korean Protestant Christian is credited for being the reason why the revival experience led to a great ingathering of new converts during subsequent years. A third influential result of the revival experience most often referred to by the Korean Protestant historians is the energetic pursuit of evangelism and the resultant increase in the growth of the church.[397] According to the Korean Protestant historians this new surge in growth naturally led to the formation of indigenous ecclesiastical structures and thus provided the structural foundations for Korean Protestant Christianity. Another generalized effect of the new zeal for evangelistic efforts is that it fostered a sense of communal cooperation between different denominational agencies.

To sum up, the Korean Protestant historians interpret the revival experience of 1907 as having led to a stronger cohesiveness between the missionaries and the Korean converts on the one hand and among the various denominational missions on the other. It is also seen as having deepened the spiritual experience of the Korean people and fully impregnated the Korean Christians with a true Christian consciousness. In addition, the Korean Protestant historians regard the historical experience of the revival as having laid the foundation for the institutional organization of the indigenous ecclesiastical structures of Korean Protestant Christianity.

Alongside the above mentioned three effects of the revival experience there are two particular characteristics that are attributed as resulting from the revival experience of 1907 and credited with defining the characteristics of Protestant Christianity in Korea. These are prayer and Bible study.

An often mentioned characteristic of Korean Protestant Christianity is the important place of prayer in the life of the Korean Protestant Christian. Needless to say, prayer is an integral part of life for a Christian, regardless of their cultural background. However, what is regarded as being particularly unique to the Korean Protestant Christians in their practice of prayer is how large congregations come

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[397] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.378; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.269; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.275; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.966-76; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.129.

together to pray, audibly and in unison. This practice is historically placed as having begun with the historical experience of revival that occurred in Korea in 1907. All five Korean Protestant historians present an account of how this characteristic came to be formed, specifically within Korea, through the revival experience of 1907.

Paik comments that a "notable feature of the revival was the audible prayers made in unison"[398] and regards "the fervour of the prayer in unison" as having "proved the depth of the spiritual experience."[399] Min characterises the audible prayers, experienced during the revival meetings, as "possessing a mystical harmony and residue of emotions" that were like "waves of praise emitted by souls filled with the overbearing power of the Holy Spirit."[400]

Unlike the accounts presented by Paik and Min, which simply present the fact that communal prayers were offered and attempt an interpretation of their significance within the revival experience, the Institute presents an account that places prayer as an active motivator in bringing about the revival experience. The Institute's account of how the various gatherings of missionaries led to the revival experience of 1907 focuses on the fact that the missionaries gathered for prayer. It is also the first account which presents a historical account of the early morning prayers practiced in Korean churches today. The Institute attributes this practice as having originated from the leadership of Gil, Seon Ju, the aforementioned Elder. According to the Institute, not only was prayer instrumental in setting the stage for the revival experience but it continued to form a central characteristic of Korean Protestant Christianity. The Institute claims that it was through the revival experience of 1907 that "the practice of praying from dawn to dusk as a congregation" became a regular feature of Korean Protestant Christianity.[401]

The intimate relationship between the prayer meetings of the missionaries over several years and the revival experience of 1907 also forms the main focus of Park,

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[398] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.371.

[399] *Ibid.*

[400] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.268.

[401] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.274.

Yong-gyu's narrative[402] while Kim, Young-jae simply notes that communal prayer was an important part of the revival experience of 1907.[403]

A second lasting characteristic that is attributed to the revival experience of 1907 is the centrality of the Bible in the life of Korean Protestant Christianity. The historical event of the revival experience of 1907 is closely connected to the Korean Protestant Christian's interaction and experience with the Bible because it occurred during "the annual Bible Training Class, which met at P'yŏngyang at the beginning of January, 1907."[404] The Korean Protestant historians concur that this particular practice of holding large Bible training classes for training and educating the Korean converts provided the environment in which a mass spiritual experience became possible.[405] The Korean Protestant historians are also unanimous in identifying the revival experience of 1907 as further strengthening the centrality and importance of the Bible and Bible study in Korean Protestant Christianity.

As the above comparative analysis of the histories shows, the Korean Protestant historians describe and interpret the historical experience that has come to be known as the Great Revival of 1907 as having been a special event that helped shape a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity. According to the Korean Protestant historians the Great Revival of 1907 provided a historical experience of purification and sanctification which enhanced the authenticity of Protestant Christianity as a religion for the Korean people. Additionally, it also served to internalise the religious experience of Protestant Christianity of the Korean Christians and led to indigenous forms of religious expression, such as the early morning prayers. The significance attributed to the revival experience of 1907 is such that the Korean Protestant historians regard their historical narrative as being incomplete without it, hence its centrality in their histories. The various positive results that are credited to it are integral to the Korean Protestant historians' portrayal of a Protestant Church

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[402] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.816-915.

[403] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.125-6.

[404] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.370; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.269; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.859-60; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.124. The phonetic spelling of Pyongyang is that carried in L. George Paik's history and is reflective of the direct quotation taken from the text.

[405] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.378: "the Bible study class provided an occasion, the revival an impetus and inner urge for the winning of souls."; Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.267; IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.269-72; Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.958-9; Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.125-6.

with indigenizing characteristics that were shaped from the earliest years of its inception. Additionally, the seemingly central role of prayer and Bible study during the preparation, execution and aftermath of the revival experience of 1907 further strengthens the perception of Korean Protestant Christianity as solidly founded on these two pillars. Therefore, for the Korean Protestant historians the revival experience of 1907 becomes *the* religious experience, which not only firmly establishes the two pillars, prayer and Bible, that are regarded as the defining characteristics of Korean Protestant Christianity, but is also the single important religious event that helped shape a unique Korean Protestant Christian identity.

## 4. Challenging the Normative Narrative of the Experience

However, this near identical description and interpretation of the revival experience of 1907 fails to address several important issues in relation to the historical experience of revivals and its subsequent development into revivalism within the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

The first is that by emphasising the seeming extraordinariness of the revival experience of 1907, the Korean Protestant historian tends to minimise the religious significance of other similar experiences in the spiritual life of Protestant Christianity in Korea. By attempting to elaborate upon the significance of this single event, the Korean Protestant historian presents this revival experience as "something miraculously different from the regular experience of the church."[406] He thus overlooks the important fact that the religious experience of a revival "is not different, in essence, from the spiritual experience that belongs to Christians at other times."[407] In attempting to differentiate this particular religious experience within the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Korean Protestant historian disassociates it from the overall spiritual experiences of Korean Protestant Christianity. The attempt to maximise the meaning of the revival experience of 1907 and attribute it with

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[406] Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), p.22.

[407] *Ibid.*

substantial religious significance to it leads, conversely, to an interpretation that places it outside of the norm of religious experience experienced by Protestant Christianity in Korea.

This would seem to bolster the Korean Protestant historians' depiction of this event as a miraculous and character forming event in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. However, when the revival experience of 1907 is placed within the wider historical context of other religious experiences in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea this depiction and interpretation eliminates any potential for continuity in terms of religious experience between the 1907 experience and other experiences of revival that occurred in subsequent years. This is because the over-emphasis on the character-shaping influence of this revival experience leads the Korean Protestant historians to trivialise other religious experiences within the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It further leads the Korean Protestant historians to judge the so-called effectiveness of previous and subsequent revival experiences from the perspective of their established description and interpretation of the 1907 revival experience. This prejudices the historical research regarding the experiences of revivals and the development of revivalism in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It also predetermines the manner in which the revival experience of 1907 is depicted and interpreted by the Korean Protestant historian and re-inforces the tendency to succumb to a repetition of the mono-narrative, the 'traditionalised' historical narrative.

Additionally, the Korean Protestant historians overlook a crucial element in the revival experience of 1907, the use of means. A proper understanding of the degree to which the revival experience of 1907 was the result of the appropriation of planned methods and means is important because it provides a crucial common link with subsequent attempts to secure a revival experience. True, the Korean Protestant historians do note that human agency in the appropriation of particular methods did exist in the lead up to the revival experience of 1906. For example, Paik specifically refers to the desire of R.A. Hardie "to see Koreans convicted of sin and to see them have an actual and living experience."[408] He also mentions the missionaries "making conscious efforts to bring about a deepening spiritual experience."[409] Min also refers

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[408] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.368.

[409] *Ibid.*, p.369.

to the human element as he refers to the missionaries' intention to separate the activities of the Church from secular and political issues.[410] Commenting upon the specific contribution of key Korean leaders during the revival experience, the Institute describes the spontaneous and voluntary gathering of Korean Christians who came together in prayer as a means of preparing for the meeting of the Bible Class in Pyongyang.[411] Reference to such preparations taken to ensure a religious revival can also be found in the history by Kim, Young-jae.[412] Additionally, the Institute notes that the attractiveness of the revival experience which occurred in Pyonyang was such, that it drew "large numbers of people from all over the country who converged upon Pyongyang to partake in this revival movement."[413] The recurrence of the human element in the events of the revival experience is most prevalent in the extended narrative presented by Park, Yong-gyu as he states that the "missionaries often met to pray asking for a revival movement to occur."[414] He repeatedly refers to gatherings by the missionaries where they actively sought to receive something similar to the revival experience that Hardie had in Wonsan. This conscientious effort on the part of the missionaries to enlarge the particular revival experience was most notably manifest in the numerous invitations extended to R. A. Hardie to lead various Bible gatherings and prayer meetings.[415] Park also elaborates upon the various preparations by the missionaries as they planned a series of gathering at the beginning of 1906 in order to disseminate this earnestness of emotions among the Korean Christians.[416]

In spite of these specific references to the role that human agency and the appropriation of means had in promoting and instigating the revival experience of 1907, the Korean Protestant historians fail to link this up with their interpretation. Thus, Park attempts to emphasize the spiritual nature of the revival experiences by noting that they were "movements for repentance manifested through the work of the

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[410] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.271-7.

[411] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, pp.269-70.

[412] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.124.

[413] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.272.

[414] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.828.

[415] *Ibid.*, pp.83-4.

[416] *Ibid.*, pp.843-5.

Holy Spirit which did not originate from political motives."[417] He further contends that the revival experiences "primarily originated from spiritual factors."[418] In a similar interpretation Kim maintains that "revival experiences are uncontrollable spiritual movements that occur as the result of the sovereign authority of the Holy Spirit."[419] Therefore, he strongly criticises and opposes any attempts to interpret such revival experiences from either political or other secular perspectives.

Such spiritualised interpretations that tend to focus primarily on the transcendent nature of the revival experience and point to the mystical manifestation of divine influence in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea can be regarded as being a theological backlash against those who attempt to invest the revival experiences with politicised interpretations. The origin of such a politicised interpretation of the revival experiences is found in the history by Min. In attempting to present a historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea that interprets events from the perspective of nationalism, Min criticises the revival experience of 1907 as resulting from "the desires of the missionaries to de-politicise the Korean Church."[420] He even goes so far as to state that this experience was a "religious purge of the Korean Church" that attempted to purify the Church from any secular motivations.[421] A similarly critical interpretation of the revival experience can be found in the history by the Institute. While attempting to maintain a balance in interpretation by elaborating upon the benefits that the revival experience had in the development of Protestant Christianity in Korea the Institute, nonetheless, critiques it by stating that "it resulted in the loss of many prominent nationalist leaders from within the membership of the Korean Church."[422] It further evaluates the revival experience as having been a "religious catharsis that diluted the national consciousness of the Korean people at a time of crisis."[423]

Although the Korean Protestant historians fail to note this in their histories, the various ways in which the revival experience of 1907 was a religious experience that

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[417] *Ibid.*, p.953.

[418] *Ibid.*

[419] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, pp.128-9.

[420] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.276.

[421] *Ibid.*, p.271.

[422] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.276.

[423] *Ibid.*

resulted from specific human endeavours with pre-determined goals, continued to influence the subsequent historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Revival experiences came to be utilised as effective instruments in turbo-charging the spiritual atmosphere of Protestant Christianity in Korea, even from the earliest periods of its historical experiences in Korea. A prominent example from the earlier period can be found in the narratives regarding what has come to be known as the Million Souls Movement. Although some would argue that the Million Souls Movement is not a revival experience,[424] yet this movement embodies the synthetical characteristics of a "*buheung sagyeonghoi*" that has become so prevalent in Korean Protestant Christianity. It was a combination of both a campaign for mass external evangelism, as well as large gatherings to encourage perseverance in the Christian faith.

The Korean Protestant historians describe this particular historical event as resulting from a desire on the part of the missionaries to renew the enthusiasm for evangelism that had followed from the revival experience of 1907. Hence, in a way they already direct our attention to the intentional and purpose-oriented nature of the experience. Paik describes the background of the Movement as having originated in 1909 from "three young missionaries of the Southern Methodist Mission at Songdo" who felt a "lack of power in their evangelistic work and believed that in their community, the spirit of the great awakening of 1907 had begun to wane."[425] Min says that the movement originated "from a simplistic faith that the goal of substantial church growth could be obtained again."[426] The Institute presents an evaluation of its background as owing to the fact that "as the enthusiasm of the Great Revival that occurred in 1907 in Pyongyang rapidly dissipated a group of missionaries sought to rekindle the faltering fire of revival."[427] Park also concurs that "the enthusiasm of the Pyongyang Great Revival Movement rapidly faded away toward the end of 1908"[428] and Kim states that the Million Souls Movement originated from "a sense of frustration by three young missionaries from the Southern Methodist Church who

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[424] J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Eastern Asia* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1975), p.33.

[425] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.384.

[426] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.298.

[427] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.277.

[428] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.925.

felt that the enthusiasm which the Korean people had possessed during the Revival Movement was becoming weaker."[429]

Interestingly, the Korean Protestant historians choose to interpret the Million Souls Movement much like they did the revival experience of 1907. The primary point of interest for the Korean Protestant historian is its image of success and the perceived positive contributions that it made to Protestant Christianity in Korea. The Korean Protestant historians acknowledge, on the one hand, that the Million Souls Movement was not wholly successful in attaining its goal of gathering in a million new converts. However, this shortfall in numerical results is considered as having been sufficiently overcome by the healthy influences that this Movement had in strengthening Korean Protestant Christianity.

Paik evaluates the Movement from two different perspectives, political and religious. Politically, he contends that "the absorption of interest in the campaign maintained peace and order during the trying years of the annexation of the country."[430] With respect to the effects of the Movement on Protestant Christianity in Korea, he regards it as having "increased the evangelistic zeal of the people and established that as a tradition of the Church" as well as adding "to the capacity of giving for the Christian cause" by the Korean Christians.[431] In quite stark contrast Min offers what could be regarded as perhaps the most negative evaluation of this Movement when he states that "though this Movement was the first properly organized evangelistic campaign undertaken by Protestant Christianity in Korea it was a total failure."[432] The Institute sees the Million Souls Movement as having "strengthened the pride and communal consciousness of the Korean Christians."[433] It also reiterates Paik's evaluation of the political effects that this movement had of transferring the political sentiment of anger and despair to a religious emotion of passion and devotion. However, unlike Paik the Institute sees this political influence as "lacking a proper sense of historical consciousness from a nationalistic perspective."[434] A more positive evaluation of the Movement is presented by Park

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[429] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.135.

[430] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.387.

[431] *Ibid.*

[432] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.298-9.

[433] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.281.

[434] *Ibid.* p.282.

who states that "though a million people were not led to Christ this Movement was the first experience of Korean Protestant Christianity uniting toward a common goal."[435] Kim also evaluates the Million Souls Movement in a positive light as having "strengthened an awareness of evangelism as an important calling of the Christian Church and provided an important experience through participation in a structured and organized evangelism campaign."[436]

From the above we can deduce several facts. The first is that the degree of enthusiasm and commitment to evangelism which resulted from the revival experience of 1907 had weakened significantly by late 1908. Interestingly enough, none of the Korean Protestant historians present any substantial evidence as to what was regarded as constituting a weakening, waning or dissipation of enthusiasm by the Korean Christians. Nor do they delve deeper into why the missionaries, particularly the three from the Southern Methodist mission who are identified specifically, concluded that a new effort was required to once again reinvigorate the Korean's enthusiasm for evangelism.

Secondly, we can identify the desire and efforts of the missionaries to initiate a concentrated effort to revive and regenerate the religious enthusiasm of the Korean Christians. We are also able to discern that the missionaries regarded such efforts as continuing their push for revival that led to the religious experience of 1907 in Pyongyang. Therefore, the missionaries, who were the major instigators, promoters and orgnisers of *both* religious experiences, were fully aware of the important role that human agency and the appropriation of means had in both.

In ignoring the role that human agency had in explaining the religious experience of revival in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Korean Protestant historian compromises his historical study of the subject in two ways. First, he exempts the missionary from any historical responsibility of the results stemming from the revival experience. In downplaying the role of human agency and the employment of means by the missionaries to facilitate a revival experience, the Korean Protestant historian implies the event is spiritual and beyond human responsibility. This may complement the desire to view the revival experience as contributing to the fundamental establishment of certain religious characters that

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[435] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.948-9.

[436] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.135.

define Korean Protestant Christianity. However, it overlooks the fact that these very characters were the result of a conscientious effort on the part of those who passed on the religious tradition that became Korean Protestant Christianity. By largely ignoring the possibility of any human factors in the revival experience, the Korean Protestant historian is assuming that the actions and motives of the missionaries were beyond reproach and filled with the best of spiritual intentions. This encases the missionary in a mythical aura which discourages a critical analysis of their actions by Korean Protestants and dismisses any such efforts as an attempt to undermine the spiritual and religious character of Korean Protestant Christianity.

Secondly, by ignoring the role that human agency had in the religious experience of revival in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Korean Protestant historians pre-empt a historical study of the subject which places it within the wider religious experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Because the particular revival experience of 1907 is romanticised as being *the* single event of Pentecost, in which the outpouring of the Spirit was greatest, any other religious experience is automatically contrasted with and evaluated in light of it. While it can be agreed that the revival experience of 1907 was a wonderful and powerful experience of spiritual authority, one cannot automatically accord it the role of a spiritual or religious standard. Although some of the characteristics that distinguish the uniqueness of Korean Protestant Christianity may be linked to this revival experience, this must be tempered with the reality that the religious characteristics of Protestant Christianity evolved throughout its history as a religion of the Korean people.

Another item of importance that is casually overlooked in the historical accounts of the revival experience by the Korean Protestant historian is that this was a limited experience within the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The Korean Protestant historians agree that Protestant Christianity in Korea began as the result of mission activities undertaken by various denominationally oriented agencies. It would naturally seem to follow that the content of the histories would adequately reflect the various differences in historical experience that are to be expected from such divergent origins. However, this is not always so. The five histories display a repeated tendency to generalise particular experiences and apply them to Protestant Christianity in Korea, regardless of the historical reality firmly portraying stark differences among the historical experiences of the denominations. This is especially prevalent when the historical narratives of the Korean Protestant historians are

describing certain events that are regarded as being central to the formulation of a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity. This is why the Korean Protestant historians fail to properly acknowledge the degree of difference between denominations when presenting their account of the revival experience of 1907.

In order for the revival experience of 1907 to be a truly defining historical experience of Korean Protestant Christian identity, which spans all denominations, it would need to have taken place at a time when the different denominations could have been directly influenced. However, a brief chronological review of the dates when individual denominations began missionary activities in Korea clearly reveals that the revival experience of 1907 is limited to a select small group of Protestant Christians, missionary and native.

The first denominational mission agencies to arrive in Korea were those of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), who both initiated their works in 1885. It is not until 1889 that we see the arrival of missionaries from a new denominational background, in the form of J. Henry Davies and his sister, M.T. Davies, who were sent to Korea by the Presbyterian Church in Australia. However, the unfortunate death of Davies after only six months in Korea and the subsequent return of his sister brought an abrupt end to the Austrualian mission. It was only in 1891 that activities resumed with the appointment and arrival of three new missionaries from Australia. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts of the Church of England began their work in Korea during this period, more specifically establishing themselves in 1890. The Southern Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) began their work in Korea as their missionaries arrived on the Korean field in late 1892 and the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) of the United States took to the Korean field as late as 1896. A still later arrival to the Korean field was the Presbyterian Church in Canada, whose missionaries arrived in Korea in 1898. As for the Baptists, their origins in Korea stemmed from individual missionaries who came without any particular support structures in the form of Mission Boards or agencies. However, through their evangelistic efforts the missionaries and their Korean converts were able to organize themselves into an ecclesiastical structure in 1906. The Holiness Church did not start its evangelistic work in Korea until May of 1907 and organised themselves institutionally in 1910; the Salvation Army began its activities in Korea in 1908.

As the above listing of dates for the arrival of various denominational missions during the earlier period of Protestant Christianity in Korea shows, several of the denominations did not establish themselves in Korea until well after 1903 and some only after 1907. Aside from the staggered arrival of denominations during the earlier period of Protestant Christian history in Korea the establishment of denominations during the latter half of the 20th century presents us with a further difficulty in interpreting the 1907 revival experience as defining the characteristics of Korean Protestant Christianity.

Unfortunately, the five histories shows little interest in or acknowledgement of the denominational characteristics of Protestant Christianity in Korea as they present a uniform description and interpretation of the revival experience of 1907. They conveniently overlook the fact that the bulk of the religious experience that comprised the revival experience of 1907, and related events, were those of the Presbyterians and the Methodists. Although one can agree, to a certain extent, that these revival experiences were also shared by the Korean Christians who belonged in areas under the supervision of other mission agencies there is no denying the fact that, even then, it simply becomes a historical experience limited to only a part of Protestant Christianity in Korea. When we compare the chronological timeframe of the revival experience with that of the arrival of individual denominational agencies, it becomes quite clear that the revival experience could not have been otherwise. Therefore, the interpretation of the 1907 revival experience by the Korean Protestant historian that attributes its influences as definitively shaping the particular characteristics of Korean Protestant Christianity can be critiqued as an over-generalisation of one event with limited participants and beneficiaries.

Before we conclude our attempt to critically analyse the historical narrative presented by the Korean Protestant historians concerning the revival experience of 1907 we must look at one particular aspect in their descriptions and interpretations. According to the Korean Protestant historians the beneficial influences of the revival experience of 1907 contributed to the formation of a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity and its central characteristics. However, when we look at the general phenomenon of revival in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity, we discover that the positive influences attributed to the Korean revival experience of 1907 can also be found in other localities where Protestant Christianity established itself as a religion of the people.

For example, in describing the notable characteristics connected with the Welsh revival of 1904 Eifion Evans states that "the social impact of the revival became proverbial. The pit-ponies could no longer understand the miners' instructions because of the absence of oaths and curses."[437] He goes on to quote D.M. Phillips and describes the influences of the revival as follows:

> the public-house and beer clubs are empty; old debts are paid; jealousy vanishes; church and family feuds are healed; great drunkards, prize-fighters, and gamblers pray in the services, and give their testimony; the chapels throughout the populous valleys of Glamorganshire are full every night; all denominations have sunk their small differences, and co-operate as one body; and the huge processions along the streets send a thrill of terror through the vilest sinners.[438]

Another notable character of the Welsh revival was that "the meetings partook of an apostolic character" with "the exercise of spiritual gifts by the entire congregation, regulated by principles such as orderliness and edification value."[439] It also "gave greater prominence to human emotion expressed in prayer, testimony and song."[440]

The revival experience in Wales in 1904 also led to a startling ingathering of new converts. According to J. Edwin Orr, the total of converts added to the churches and published in local newspapers showed an increase of "70,000 in two months, 85,000 in five, and more than a hundred thousand in half a year."[441] Not only did the number of attendance in churches rise dramatically, but "stocks of Welsh and English Bibles were sold out" and "prayer meetings were held in coal mines, in trains and trams and places of business."[442] The Welsh Revival of 1904 was noted by

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[437] Eifion Evans, *The Welsh Revival of 1904* (London: Evangelical Press, 1969), p.161.

[438] *Ibid.*, pp.161-2. Original quote taken from D.M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work*, Eighth edition, 1923, p.125.

[439] *Ibid.*, p.163.

[440] *Ibid.*, p.176.

[441] J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), p.17.

[442] *Ibid.*

contemporaries as being "on the whole a movement among the people" which "consisted almost entirely by prayer and praise" and that was full of "confidence in the inspired Word of God, the power of earnest, united prayer, and the power of sacred song." It was also noted that "confession of sin was particular and specific."[443]

Speaking of revival experiences that occurred in different parts of the world during the twentieth century Orr reports that "prayer meetings became more and more numerous, and a spirit of confession of sins was manifested among Christians" in Norway "in the New Year of 1905."[444] The results of this revival experience in Norway are described as having been expressed through actions in which "old debts were settled and conscience money was paid-up; misappropriated articles were restored, intoxication was abandoned by many, and a purer moral atmosphere was noted."[445]

In Latin America, a spate of revivals took place in which "the effect of the phenomenal awakenings and regular evangelism" led to the growth of the church by 180 percent.[446] Not only was there a remarkable growth in the churches throughout Latin America, there were particular religious experiences which bear a startling resemblance to those in Korea. For example, the successful distribution of the Bible in Brazil was such that "missionaries were often being greeted by spontaneously grown congregations of interested people" and "audiences of hundreds met first-time visitors" to their locales.[447] In addition, "there was 'an apparent eagerness to more faithfully perform their duty'" among the Christians in Brazil in 1905.

> The Sunday Schools were crowded with eager pupils seeking a knowledge of the Bible; preaching services were characterised by the same eagerness for God's Word. In spite of the worst financial crisis in the history of the nation to date, money was being poured into the work by Brazilians.

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[443] *Ibid.*, p.20.

[444] *Ibid.*, p.52.

[445] *Ibid.*, p.53.

[446] *Ibid.*, p.107.

[447] *Ibid.*, p.102.

> As a result, many churches were not only paying their own pastor's salaries but supporting national evangelists, sent into the country. Teams of young men held evangelistic services in their cities and towns and villages, voluntarily.
>
> Besides the various operations of evangelism, the more social enterprises of both missions and churches enjoyed financial support, such as the Y.M.C.A. and the ... hospitals and schools.[448]

In Chile, a local revival which occurred in 1902 saw members of the church "raise their voices in simultaneous and audible prayer" to the astonishment of their missionary pastor.[449]

As for the American experience of revival, there was "a remarkable consensus ... on the characteristics that stamped the awakening of 1857-58 as a genuine religious revival."[450] These views transcended "the Baptist and Methodist emphasis on individual conversions or the Presbyterian and Episcopal heritage of a revitalized church."[451] Some of the characteristics that were particularly highlighted were

> (1) its spontaneous, providential origin, sometimes expressed as the "work of the Holy Spirit"; (2) the stress on Christian unity ("union"); (3) the focus on prayer; (4) lay involvement, both in prayer meetings and in the "personal work" of evangelism; (5) widespread conversion; (6) calmness and order of the meetings; and (7) general public acceptance.[452]

The above excerpts from the revival experiences that occurred in different parts of the world present us with a means of appreciating the revival experience of 1907 that occurred in Korea. Of the many items that were noted by the Korean Protestant

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[448] *Ibid.*, p.103.

[449] *Ibid.* p.105.

[450] Kathryn Teresa Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening*, p.108.

[451] *Ibid.*

[452] *Ibid.*, pp.108-9.

historians regarding the "uniqueness" of the Korean experience, only the interpretation of it having contributed to a better understanding between the missionary and the Korean Protestant Christian stands out as meriting this distinction. All the other influences, from moral regeneration and social transformation to remarkable numerical growth and the strengthening of indigenous organisations can be found in the revival experiences of other countries as well. Furthermore, the prominence of prayer gatherings in instigating, promoting, and carrying forward the revival experience is also revealed as a universal character of revival, regardless of locale. Surprisingly, the act of joining together in spontaneous and audible prayer was not unique to the Korean experience of revival with the experience in Chile actually predating the Korean experience by a full two years.

Therefore, in considering the above it would appear that the fondness attributed to the "unique" characteristics of the Korean revival experience of 1907 is more a product of naïve ethno-centrism and inadequately reflects the nature of revival as a Christian religious phenomenon with universal characteristics. The fact that the Korean Protestant historians uniformly portray the revival experience of 1907 as being the religious experience that had formulated a lasting Korean Protestant Christian identity seems to display more the accumulated habit of uncritical replication of a normative 'traditionalised' historical narrative than an authentic research into the nature of revival and its significance in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a universal and catholic religion.

**Conclusion**

The above comparative and critical analysis of the histories by Korean Protestant historians clearly reveals how they uncritically replicate the descriptions and interpretations of a "historicised" normative historical narrative regarding the subject of revival in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. They trace the genesis of the revival experience of 1907 to the same origins, the religious experience of a particular missionary in 1903. They reiterate the same sequence of events that led up to the revival experience of 1907 and confine their narratives to depicting the contributions of identical individuals. They also interpret the resultant influences of

the revival experience of 1907 in the same manner and uniformly regard it as having formulated the defining characteristics of a Korean Protestant Christian identity.

Given that they are studying a single event, the tendency for their historical narratives to overlap may be unavoidable. After all, despite the best attempts by a historian to employ a different historiography for studying a given subject, there are certain factual elements that are, inevitably, repeated. However, the degree of conformity in its interpretation and the evaluation of its significance in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea points toward more ominous motives for repetition.

The near unanimity of the historical narratives claim a particular identity of Protestant Christianity in Korea by presenting particular aspects of a historical experience with the specific goal of presenting a purpose-filled narrative. Our critical and comparative analysis clearly reveals that the historians fail to engage in a historical study of the revival experience in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea in a sufficiently adequate manner. The purported application of different historiographies does nothing to supplement or amend the domineering "historicised" historical narrative as it pertains to the subject of revival in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In fact, the contents would seem to indicate that the Korean Protestant historians singularly fail to appropriate any new or different perspectives with regard to the historical study of the subject. In addition, the Korean Protestant historians present the historical narrative in a way which only serves to support the existing "historicised" grand narrative. It further contributes to re-emphasising the historicity of a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity through its depiction of an identical relationship between the historical experience of revival and Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Consequently, we can only conclude that the perspective and method of inquiry utilised by the Korean Protestant historians are heavily influenced by the pre-existing sense of Korean Protestant Christian identity. The influence of this pre-existing identity is so significant in the psyche of the Korean Protestant historians that they appropriate it into their historical study of revival in Protestant Christianity in Korea without deliberation or critical reflection. As a result, despite the purported construction and application of supposedly unique and different historiographies, the description and interpretation of the historical experience of revival in Protestant Christianity in Korea, as it is presented by the Korean Protestant historians, merely conform to the existing normative 'traditionalised' historical narrative. The habitual

repetition of already existing descriptions and interpretations of the subject thus function to further legitimate the existing 'traditionalised' historical narrative. This, in turn, strengthens the already existing Korean Protestant Christian identity. In the end, the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by the Korean Protestant historians regarding the revival experience become replications borne of habit rather than an authentic research of history.

# Chapter 6 – A Critical and Comparative Analysis of the Relation Between Church and Nation in the Historical Experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea

## Introduction

One of the strongest elements in the characteristics which define a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity is its perception of itself as a national religion. The term "national religion," in this instance, does not mean that Protestant Christianity is a religion sanctioned as the representative faith of the Korean people. In fact, although the Korean Protestants clearly delight in emphasising the fact that nearly twenty-five percent of the population in South Korea are Christians this should not detract from the ominous fact that clearly seventy-five percent are not.[453] Additionally, since the collapse of the Joseon Dynasty in the late 19th century Korea has been a secular society that has not elevated a particular religion to the status of an official religion, similar to that of Shintoism in Japan or the Church of England in England.

After the late 19th century, when the Joseon Dynasty, founded and maintained upon Confucian principles, finally succumbed to the forces of western modern social

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[453] This emphasis on the statistical figure of 25%, sometimes boisterously referred to as "one quarter of the population" or "one in every four Koreans," has recently been shown up to be a statistical rodomontade. Although in order to reach this statistic of 25% one would necessarily have to include the Roman Catholics, the basic nuance of the above statements are such that one is inclined to think that it represented the percentage of Protestant Christians. The most recent National Population Census taken in 2005 shows that out of a population total of 47 million nearly 25 million professed adherence to a specific religion. Of this 25 million nearly 11 million were Buddhists, 5 million Catholic, 8 million Protestant and the rest spread between Confucianism (104, 575), Won Buddhism (129,907), *Jeungsan-gyo* (34,550), *Cheondo-gyo* (45,835), *Daejong-gyo* (3,766) and other religions (163,085). According to this census, then, the total percentage of Protestant Christians in South Korea is approximately 18.32 percent. It is only when one includes the Roman Catholics (app. 10.94%) that we can claim nearly 30% of the population of South Korea as being Christians. Indeed, this is a substantial percentage of the population and appears to reflect a genuine increase in interest and commitment to Christianity in general. However, these statistics clearly reveal that neither Protestantism nor Roman Catholicism collectively, let alone individually, ever reached a critical mass in terms of religious demographic that could lend credibility to either tradition, or for that matter the Christian tradition as a whole, attaining status as a "national religion" of Korea. For statistical data refer to the website displaying the statistical data collected by the Korean National Statistical Office at <<http://kosis.nso.go.kr>>

and political ideology, Korea became a secular society in which diverse religious movements were given freedom of expression, practice, and propagation. At no time after this period did the Korean people or government give their allegiance to any particular religion. In fact, Article Eleven of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea formed in 1948 specifically states that "All citizens shall be equal before the law, and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, social or cultural life on account of sex, religion or social status." More specifically, Paragraphs One and Two of Article Twenty clearly state that "All citizens shall enjoy freedom of religion" and that "no state religion shall be recognised, and religion and state shall be separated."

Therefore, there is no historical evidence, either in terms of demographics or political policy, which would legitimate any party referring to their particular religion as being a "national religion" and basing a fundamental perception of their identity on this ideal. The question, then, is "From whence did the ideals of this identity come?" and, additionally, "Is this perception of identity historically valid?"

Bearing in mind the plausibility of the two questions raised above, the purpose of this chapter is to attempt a critical and comparative analysis of the histories by Korean Protestant historians regarding Protestant Christian interaction with the nation and state. We will attempt to engage the subject through a comparative analysis of the five histories by Korean Protestant historians as they pertain to the historical experiences of Protestant Christian interaction with state and nation. We will then attempt a critical analysis of the historical depictions and interpretations of the Korean Protestant historians' narrative concerning the relationship between Church, state and nation. By utilising the two questions above as a basic guideline for our critical analysis we will attempt to show how the particular Korean Protestant Christian identity, with regard to its perception of itself as a national religion based on the depictions and interpretations of its relation with state and nation, is itself a historical construct. We will also attempt to show how and why this historically constructed identity is inadequate for reflecting the historical reality that Protestant Christianity in Korea has experienced as a religion among the Korean people, existing as it has, in the midst of many religions.

## 1. Enlightening the Hermit Nation – Protestant Christianity and its Contribution to Building a Modern Korea

For the Korean Protestant historians Protestant Christianity is regarded as having a close affinity with the modernisation of Korea. The histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea herald the arrival of Protestantism as an epochal event which stimulated the modernisation and westernisation of Korea and led to the enlightenment of her people. Protestant Christianity's role in the history of the Korean people is elevated to a status higher than that of a mere religion. It is regarded as the epitome of civilisation, culture, and morality which rescued Korea from the depths of barbaric heathenism to modern industrialism and democracy.

For the Korean Protestant historians Korea was a "Hermit Nation" which had stubbornly refused the benefits of Western influences that would have helped to modernise and industrialise its society and economy, thus allowing it to enter the world of enlightened nation states. Within the histories by the Korean Protestant historians the period of late 19th and early 20th centuries are depicted as lacking anything positive in terms of Korea's social, religious, cultural, or political situation. For example, L. George Paik presents as part of his Introduction, a good deal of background information regarding Korea. This introductory chapter contains an anthropological analysis of the Korean people, their land, and their cultural and religious history. However, this description of Korea employs an anthropological view that is defined by a Western bias of racial superiority.

Within the histories of Protestant Christianity of Korea by the Korean Protestant historians the image of Korea as a "Hermit Nation" and an emphasis on the closed-door policy of Korea is continuously presented in a negative manner. However, none of the Korean Protestant historians either question where this depiction of Korea originated nor do they question whether it properly reflects the actual context of Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The perception of Korea as a "Hermit Nation" can readily be found in the literature authored by Westerners who encountered Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Given that the term, itself, denotes an evaluation of Korea as seen from an outsider, it would be appropriate to assume that this conceptualisation of Korea originated from the viewpoint of non-Koreans. One of the publications that

particularly emphasises the image of Korea as a "Hermit Nation" is the book written by William E. Griffis and published in New York in 1882 entitled, "*Corea, The Hermit Nation.*" A comparative analysis of the footnotes in all five of the histories clearly shows that the Korean Protestant historian unabashedly utilises this book in constructing their narrative of the Korean context in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

However, a relatively recent study which reviewed the process by which Griffis came to write this book, as well as critically surveying its contents has revealed several interesting points which question the validity of it as a primary or even secondary source for understanding the Korean context during the initial stages of Korea's interaction with the West. The first question regarding the integrity and accuracy of this publication is whether a person who had never visited Korea can claim to have authored an authentically researched manuscript on Korea's situation. Although one does not need to actually be resident in or have personal experience of a particular locale in order to write about it the degree of accuracy and academic integrity regarding the contents, which would naturally have to rely on secondary or tertiary material, can only be suspect.

Furthermore, when one considers that Griffis was unable to read Korean we can only conclude that he relied primarily on material by non-Koreans found outside of Korea. Given that the Koreans were unable, at this point in their history, to present an account of their interaction with the Western culture this would mean that Griffis is actually doing little more than splicing and editing the perspectives, observations, and interpretations of others to fit his image of Korea as a "Hermit Nation." The fact that he quotes extensively from *Corea, Its History, Manners, and Customs* by John Ross and *Histoire d'Eglise de Corée* by Charles Dallet provides further evidence to question the contents of *Corea, the Hermit Nation.* Additionally, when one considers that Griffis "chose to compare Korea . . . with Japan, which he naturally praised, in an effort to explain Japan's success" the motives for authoring the manuscript also become suspect.[454]

Another question relating to its objectivity and accuracy of accounts can be raised with regard to his adoption of "the ultranationalist historical views of

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[454] Yi, Tae-jin, "Was Korea Really a "Hermit Nation" in Korean National Commission for UNESCO ed., *Korean History: Discovery of Its Characteristics and Developments* (Seoul: Hollym, 2004), p.389.

contemporary Japanese intellectuals" asserting that a Japanese colony, Mimana, was established on the Korean peninsula, which is not true. Griffis, furthermore, spells the "names of the Korean kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla according to their Japanese pronunciation – *korai*, *hyakusai*, and *shinra*."[455] In this sense, *Corea, the Hermit Nation* can be evaluated as a book which had the purpose of accentuating the success of Japanese modernisation by contrasting it with the failed modernisation of Korea. That such a book is totally inadequate for assessing the true context of late 19th to early 20th century Korea becomes quite evident from this analysis.

A further challenge to such simplistic depictions of the historical context of late 19th and early 20th century Korea can be found in many of the more contemporary historical studies of this period. Recent studies have clearly revealed that the Korean government, under the leadership of King Gojong, actually implemented various programmes and established specific policies to accelerate Korea's entry into the world of modern nation states, governmental structures being re-organised in order to facilitate Korea's modernisation on its own terms. Additionally, the King personally appointed officials with enlightened ideas to visit Japan in order to learn how it had achieved modernisation. He further appointed individuals who were open-minded to interaction with foreign powers to positions of leadership. All of these efforts by the Korean government were, to a certain extent, the results of pressure from external forces. However, recent studies that have attempted to examine this contemporary context from various perspectives, and which have sought to utilise more of the Korean sources dealing with this period, have highlighted the inadequacy of presuming that Korea's failure to modernise was the result of her incompetence or ignorance. These studies clearly show that there was a more complex dynamics of interest groups acting in varying degrees for different purposes.[456]

When we consider such results stemming from contemporary research we must question why the Korean Protestant historians consistently replicate such prejudiced depictions of Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the reasons could be that the Korean Protestant historians uniformly depend on non-Korean Western sources for information regarding this particular period. As a result, the

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[455] *Ibid.*, p.390.

[456] For details of government re-structuring and Korea's pursuit of her own enlightenment policy see Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, pp.270-3. Also, Yi, Tae-jin, "Was Korea Really a "Hermit Nation?", pp.400-11.

histories of the Korean Protestant historians naturally incorporate, uncritically, the political and cultural biases that informed Western writing on Korea. Although one might regard the inclusion of such bias as unintentional, this does not change the fact that they serve to influence the historical interpretation of the context by Korean Protestant historians and, therefore, prejudice it. The practice of quoting Western sources, especially those of missionaries, to provide a "conclusive description of the Korean context," further contributes to the biased perception portrayed by the Korean Protestant historians. That this is a uniform practice in all five histories, regardless of historiography, and one which ignores developments in Korean historical studies which challenge this Western dominated description of Korean history during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, would also suggest a degree of, at best, complacency in approaching the historical subject by the Korean Protestant historian. This leads us to further suspect that the Korean Protestant historian is not conducting his study of the subject with the goal of presenting a work of authentic historical research but simply being satisfied to present a mere habitual repetition of the existing 'traditionalised' historical narrative as it pertains to the issue of the relationship between Church, state and nation.

Interestingly, these negative depictions of the Korean context can also be found in the histories that argue for a nationalistic description and interpretation of the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In describing the period when Korea was engaging in treaties with Western powers Min describes Korea as a country "weak in strength and grossly unprepared" for the onslaught of "foreign economic, military and political power."[457] Korea is depicted as "listlessly observing the wild rampage of foreign powers with eyes unable to focus on the reality of her situation."[458] This depiction of Korea as an ignorant, unprepared victim of external forces is continued in the historical study of Protestant Christianity conducted by the Institute. The Institute claims that "when the Daeweongun was finally removed from the seat of power after nearly ten years, the new Korean government was not adequately prepared to deal with foreign powers when Japan forced Korea into the Treaty of Ganghwa in 1876 and forcefully opened her doors."[459]

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[457] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.119.

[458] *Ibid.*

[459] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.123.

The degree to which this negative depiction of Korea is consistently present in the histories by Korean Protestant historians is portrayed in the fact that such descriptions continue in the more recent histories. For example, Park portrays Korea as having been incapable of deciding her future by stating that "the matter of opening the doors of Korea to foreign countries surged ahead, regardless of the desires or wishes of the Korean people."[460] Likewise, Kim also claims that "the increasing onslaught of foreign powers ultimately forced King Gojong to renounce the Closed Door Policy that the Korean government had been pursuing."[461] He goes on to state that "the Korean government, which was totally unprepared, opened Korea's doors to the outside world . . . and entered into numerous treaties with Western countries."[462]

Then, what is the reason for the continued negative description of the Korean context during the late 19th and early 20th centuries? This can only be explained by the format that the Korean Protestant historians adopt in order to explain the grand entrance of Protestant Christianity in to the historical saga of the Korean people. The negative depiction of the Korean situation serves to dramatically glamorise the entry of Protestant Christianity into this dismal and despairing context. It further serves to enhance the romantic interpretation of Protestant Christianity's beneficial contributions to modernising and enlightening Korea, thereby steering it toward modernity.

According to the Korean Protestant historians, when the "Hermit Nation" was, at last, opened to the world through treaties, it was the arrival of American Protestant missionaries that introduced the "progressive, wholesome, and energetic spirit of life" that was so desperately needed.[463] In fact, the Korean Protestant historians interpret the initiation of Protestant missions by missionaries from the United States as providential. For example, Paik remarks, "we cannot say what might have happened had the first Protestant missionaries been other than American citizens." He further goes on to qualify this comment by stating that "the nationality of the early missionaries, their cautious activities, their prompt obedience to the law, and their disinterested counsel and sympathy, won the favour of the court and the high

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[460] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.268.

[461] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.65.

[462] *Ibid.*

[463] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.13.

esteem of the people."[464] These observations would seem to indicate that Paik regards the success of initial Protestant initiatives in Korea to have been due to the nationality of the missionaries and the commendable characteristics of the missionaries as Americans.

This sentiment is also replicated in the history by Min when he argues that

> the introduction of Christianity to Joseon required that it be of a type which was not related to the nation states of Western Christendom. This means that, inevitably, the type of Christianity that successfully entered Joseon was of an evangelical, revivalistic, denominational character. Toward this end, it was the missionaries from America who first established their presence on the Korean peninsula and constructed the ramparts of Protestantism, thereby becoming the heroes in the first chapter of Korean Protestant Christianity.[465]

The above observation serves to support Min's narrative of Protestant contact with Korea before it became possible for foreigners to reside in Korea. Within his history Min briefly describes how individuals who were connected with the various missionary societies of Europe, i.e. Western Christendom, came into contact with Korea and her people. However, these contacts all had the common characteristics of occurring within the context of efforts to open Korea to trade and intercourse with Western imperial powers. They were also brief in duration and did not have any notable impact on the religious context of Korea. In contrast, the entrance of the American missionaries is regarded as having had no ties with colonial aspirations. As such, the motives of the American missionaries are perceived as being purely religious in intent and purpose. The fact that the Korean court readily accepted their presence is presented as evidence of the absence of American colonial or imperial aspirations. The speed and degree of acceptance by the Korean people and the work of the missionaries to alleviate their physical suffering and spiritual misery is regarded as evidence of the religious benefits that the American missionaries brought.

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[464] *Ibid.*, p.163.

[465] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.143.

The combination of "non-colonial aspirations" and "genuine religious concern" for the Korean people are depicted, by Min, as characterising the missionaries from America and contrasting them with those from Christendom, engrossed in its colonial quests and employing religion to affect their imperial expansion. However, this simplified and generalised perception of the United States and Americans merely seems to reflect the Korean experience with the earliest Protestant missionaries rather than the national traits of the American people as a whole. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that the United States was also an integral part of Western Christendom and was a major player in the imperial enterprise of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, an enterprise that continues to this date. The fact that it did not harbour any inclination for direct colonization of Korea does not exempt it from its status as an imperial power during this period. In addition, the foreign policy of the United States and the mission policies of various Boards and mission institutions organised by the Americans clearly show that colonial expansion and missionary enterprise co-existed in the historical experiences of American Protestantism. Therefore, simply lauding the Americans as benevolent, religiously minded individuals who, contrary to the practice of the period, were innocent to any form of colonialism is to disregard the fact that colonialism and its companion, Western notions of cultural and religious superiority, were an integral part of the imperial and orientalist worldview prevalent during this period. By positioning the missionaries as the historical benefactors of Korean modernity, the Korean Protestant historian pre-empts any possibility of critiquing their role or function as part of the colonial process and the influences of imperialism to which Korea and the Korean people were subjugated.[466]

The lack of acknowledgement regarding the prevalent imperial worldview that informed much of Western Christendom's missionary enterprise during this period is best reflected in how the Korean Protestant historians describe the philanthropic activities of the American missionaries as possessing both proselytising and modernising influences.

It has been well established in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea that the earliest missionaries to Korea began their work by first establishing schools

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[466] For a descriptive account of the correlation between missionary enterprise and imperialism, the manner in which it was regarded as providential, and the influence this worldview had on missionary attitudes and actions see Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), pp.20-1.

and hospitals. According to Paik, the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was the first to establish a Western styled educational institution in Korea. Autumn of 1885 is described as having been the epochal period when missionary education sowed its first seeds on Korean soil. He describes how in October 1885 Mrs. Mary F. Scranton managed to purchase the first plot of land on which to begin her educational work. Likewise, at nearly the same time, Henry G. Apenzeller is noted as having received permission from the Korean King to begin his school.[467] The Presbyterians followed suit approximately a year later with Horace G. Underwood opening a boarding school for boys and Annie J. Ellers beginning a school for girls.[468]

Min gives a much more abbreviated account of Protestant relations with education in Korea. However, this does not mean that he regards education to have been less influential in the spread of Protestantism in Korea. As a matter of fact, he states without hesitation that "Protestantism entered Korea alongside modern education."[469] He even goes so far as to declare that "the contribution of the Protestant Church to the advancement of education and culture is unparalleled."[470] Min goes on to describe in detail the process by which missionary schools were established in Korea. In commenting upon the founding of the *Beje Hagdang*, he states that it "was the first private school, providing the modern form of education, to be established in Korea."[471] However, regarding the beginning date for the girl's school, which later came to be called the *Ehwa Hagdang*, he differs from Paik in stating that "it began on 30 May, 1886."[472] Unfortunately, as Min gives no reference for the setting of this date it is difficult to contrast this with Paik's narrative.

Considering the fact that the Institute also presents a different date for when the *Ehwa Hagdang* first began[473] the difficulty of establishing, historically, the date

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[467] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.126-8. Paik quotes from the Methodist Episcopal North Report for 1886. ". . . our missions school was opened June 8th, 1886 and continued in session until July 2 . . ." *Ibid.*, p.129.

[468] *Ibid.*, pp.130-1.

[469] Min, Gyoeng-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.245.

[470] *Ibid.*

[471] *Ibid.*, p.246.

[472] *Ibid.*

[473] The Institute gives this date as 31 May, 1886. IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.198.

when modern education for girls was officially begun in Korea seems to take on further complications. As for the beginnings of the *Beje Hagdang*, the Institute quotes from Apenzeller's diary and states that "the school began officially on 8 June 1886 with two students."[474] According to the Institute, this was "the beginning of modern education in Korea."[475]

In a similar vein, Park claims that the Western form of modern education introduced by the missionaries was "the harbinger of Korea's modernisation."[476] Unlike the other histories he attempts to emphasise the important role that the mission schools played in the missionary's plans for evangelism. Quoting extensively from mission sources, he claims that the primary role of mission schools was to function as a contact point for engaging Koreans who were ignorant of the Christian gospel.[477] As such, according to Park "the missionaries unequivocally sought to realize a Christian idealism in all their schools."[478] Interestingly, he gives two conflicting dates for when the *Beje Hagdang* officially began, both within the contents of his history. The earlier date is 3 August 1885. He states that this was when "Apenzeller began the *Beje Hagdang* with two students in the *sarang*[479] of his house in Jeongdong, Seoul." He gives another date, which he refers to twice in his narrative, of 8 June 1886. According to Park, this date was when the Mission Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church recognised the status of Appenzeller's school as an official missionary enterprise.[480]

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[474] *Ibid.*, p.197.

[475] *Ibid.*

[476] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, p.547.

[477] *Ibid.*, p.548.

[478] *Ibid.*, p.547.

[479] The *sarang* was a room situated near the main gate of a traditional Korean house in which men entertained their male guests. It was often used as a place where men would gather to discuss matters of importance with friends and colleagues. It was also a place for receiving visitors and also used for providing hospitality to passers-by.

[480] This practice of putting forward different dates for when the *Beje Hagdang* originally started is something that is not found in the other histories by Korean Protestant historians. As noted in a previous footnote Paik simply describes how Apenzeller reports on beginning educational work through the school by quoting the Methodist Episcopal (North) Report for 1866: ". . . our missions school was opened June 8th, 1886 and continued in session until July 2 . . ." *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.129. However, Min expressly states that "Apenzeller founded the *Beje Hagdang* in August 1885." *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, pp.245-6. In an interesting contrast the Institute states that "in November 1885 Apenzeller had already received permission from King Gojong, through the office of Mr. Foulk, the American minister, to begin his work in founding a school. Thereafter, on 8 June 1886 he officially began his school with two students." *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.197.

A similar description of events is presented by Kim who states that "the Methodist missionary, Appenzeller, began a modern form of education with two or three students in late 1885." However, unlike Park he describes the date of June 1886 as being "the official beginning of the school with two students" in correlation to "the permission granted by King Gojong through the American minister," which was given in November 1885.[481]

As we can see from the above snippets from the histories by the Korean Protestant historians, they are predominantly occupied with presenting a record of how the Protestant missionaries were successful in establishing their various educational institutions. They also bear similarities in that the subsequent narratives regarding these institutions focus, primarily, on the success of the missionaries in recruiting students and uniformly attempt to highlight the contribution of these missionary institutions to the enlightenment and modernisation of the Korean people.

To a certain extent it is true that the institutions established by the American missionaries contributed to the development of modern and western forms of education in Korea. However, this contribution must also be considered in light of several important factors surrounding the educational enterprise as it existed in Korea during this period. Simply describing the institutions established by the Protestant missionaries as being the sole instigators of modern education by highlighting their relative success leads to a disproportioned interpretation of the historical context. In order to better understand, describe and interpret the process by which the modernising project for education in Korea came about, historically, it is necessary to review the social developments of mid 19$^{th}$ century Joseon. This is important when one bears in mind the tumultuous context in which various catalysts were working together and eventually led to the development and implementation of what can be called Korea's modernisation project.

Many historians, including Korean Protestant historians, have interpreted the rise of factional strife among the Confucian literati as having proved the inadequacies of

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Kim further contributes to the complication surrounding the dates by stating that "Appenzeller had begun to provide modern education to two or three students near the end of 1885" while simultaneously stating that "after receiving official permission in November of 1885 from King Gojong through the American minister he formally started a school in June 1886 with two students." *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.85.

[481] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.85.

Confucianism, even the neo-Confucianism that had been dominant in Joseon, as being inadequate for a "modern" society. However, this factional strife can alternatively be interpreted as reflecting the rise of diverse interpretations and arguments of what construed a truly Confucian society. The rise in the degree of different interpretations and the number of contrasting groups that advocated different points of view can be seen as indicative of a rise in the awareness of numerous political and social issues which could not be resolved by traditional orthodoxy. The prominence of *Sirhak* (Practical Science), which first manifest itself in the theoretical field of neo-Confucianism in the 17th century, is one indication that there were indeed indigenous efforts, far before the arrival of Western norms of modernity, which sought to address the socio-political challenges facing the Joseon Dynasty. The fact that the advocates of *Sirhak* centred their theoretical arguments and practical suggestions on issues surrounding state reform is evidence that it was an ideological framework that sought to dismantle the medieval system of government and establish a reformed state and society.[482]

As Korea entered into the 19th century the traditional structures of Korean society began to manifest the strains of a stringently hierarchical social structure. This was a period when the traditional social structure of Korea began to rapidly destabilise. It was also a period when the breadth and depth of social disturbance and change was greater and stronger than any other period in Joseon's history. The rise of private merchants during the late 18th century continued throughout the 19th and they gradually came to form a separate social category of their own. The prominence of the reform oriented *Sirhak* ideology, combined with a social class that was able to capitalise upon the various social and political changes that this ideology brought, was instrumental in the inception and development of modern education as part of Korea's modernisation project. Contrary to the established norm of perceiving Joseon society as a stratified hierarchy, the late 19th century society began to witness

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[482] Jeong, Ho-hun, "*Joseon Hugi Sirhak-ui Jeonge-wa Gaehyeogron*" (The Development of *Sirhak* During the Late *Joseon* Dynasty and its Theories of Reform) in Institute for Korean Studies, Yonsei University ed., *Jeontong-ui Byeonyong-gwa Geunde Gaehyeok* (Reinvention of Traditions and Modern Transformation in Early Modern Korea) (Seoul: Taehagsa, 2004), pp.18-9. Also, Kim, Do-hyeong, "*Gehang Jeonhu Sirhak-ui Byeonyong-gwa Geunde Gehyeogron*" (The Reinvention of *Sirhak* Ideology and Theories of Modern Reform Before and After Korea's Opening of Ports) in *Jeontong-ui Byeonyong-gwa Geunde Gaehyeok* (Reinvention of Traditions and Modern Transformation in Early Modern Korea), p.93.

an increase in cooperative ventures between what can, in modern Western terms, be referred to as the intelligentsia and the *bourgeoisie*.

An example of such a venture can be found in the establishment of the first modern school in Korea, the *Wonsan Hagsa*. As a result of the Treaty of Ganghwa, signed with Japan in 1876, Korea was obliged to open Busan and two other ports to Japanese trade and residence. According to the contents of the Treaty the Japanese had the right to designate which ports should be opened. After much research and debate the ports of Wonsan, on the east coast, and Incheon, on the west, were selected by the Japanese.[483] Consequently, in 1880, Wonsan became a trading outpost for Japanese merchants and, subsequently, a Japanese residence was established. With the arrival of the Japanese, the people of Wonsan and Deogsan, located in the immediate vicinity of the port, continuously suffered under the ever increasing encroachment of the Japanese merchants and opportunists. In order to strengthen the indigenous defences against such advances the Korean residents of Wonsan and Deogsan felt the need for a modern school that could educate potential leaders from the community. The residents petitioned the Government Superintendent of Wonsan, Jeong, Hyeon-seog to establish a modern educational institution and 1883 saw the establishment of Korea's first modern school, the *Wonsan Hagsa* (Wonsan School).[484] This school was founded by a combination of public funding from the government and private investment by the merchants of Wonsan and the people of Deogsan. In this sense, the establishment of the *Wonsan Hagsa* can be interpreted as a realization of the *Sirhak* ideal through the practical support of the newly emergent middle-class. It is also symbolic in that it can be regarded as embodying the aspirations and desires of both the Korean people and government to modernise their country and enlighten their people in order to equip themselves against the encroachment of external powers and influence.

In this respect, the development of a consciousness toward the importance of western-styled modern education can be traced, historically, to the Treaty of Ganghwa with Japan in 1876. However, the inclination toward a new attitude regarding the West can be found even earlier. When King Gojong took full authority for affairs of state from his father, the Daeweongun, he inaugurated a policy of pro-

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[483] Lee, Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, p.269.

[484] Lee, Seung-won, *Haggyo-ui Tansaeng* (The Birth of the Modern School) (Seoul: Humanist, 2005), p.21.

active engagement with other countries. This was a radical re-orientation from that of previous policies and signalled a desire of the King to engage in a process of modernisation on Korea's own terms. In order to successfully implement this policy, the King required the support of government officials who not only shared his ideals but were adequately equipped to put these ideals into practice. Unfortunately, those who had been educated through the traditional system and trained in Confucian classics not only did not have the wherewithal that the King required but they were actively against the policy of engagement. Therefore, in order to usher in a new era there was a need to train up a new generation of leaders. In this respect, the restructuring of the educational system along the model of Western-styled modern education afforded the King an opportunity to restructure his government and employ individuals who shared his ideals of modernisation.

In order to learn how best to appropriate Western modes of society the King arranged for a special commission to be sent to Japan to learn how she had modernised herself.[485] The emissaries he selected were all young individuals who shared the King's vision for modernising Korea.[486] Upon returning from their fact-finding mission the emissaries strongly urged the King to adopt modern modes of education in order fully utilise the benefits of Western technology in Korea's modernisation project. Acting upon their advice the King issued a royal decree in 1882 which stipulated that all people, regardless of class or background, should go to school and be educated.[487] That this was a government initiative is made clear by an

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[485] The first commission was sent in 1876, immediately after the Treaty of Ganghwa had been signed. A second commission was sent in 1880. It was Kim, Hong-jib, who led this second commission, who brought back the "A Policy for Korea" by Huang Tsun-hsien which encouraged the Koreans to actively make treaties with Western nations. It was this booklet that said Korea "should seek to achieve self-strengthening under the umbrella of a foreign policy of close friendship with China, treaty ties with Japan, and diplomatic relations with America." Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, p.270.

[486] In fact, it was these young individuals who were later instrumental in initiating the reforms which restructured the government and adopted Western modes of governance, social structure and cultural renewal. However, the individuals who possessed such enlightened views soon developed quite contrasting views of how to affect reform and to what extent. The more conservative of the enlightened party sought to reform Korean society and government but wished to do so while preserving the monarchy and some of the traditional feudal characteristics. The more progressive party, on the other hand, wanted a radical reform of Korean society, much like that which had been wrought in Japan during the Meiji restoration. To a certain extent, some of the oscillations of domestic rivals and their respective foreign patrons represented in these two groups led to the greater instability and inability of the Korean government to fully reorganise itself and successfully implement an effective modernising project for Korea.

[487] *Gojong Sillok* (Chronicles of King Gojong's Reign), The Nineteenth Year (1882), December 28.

article in the *Hanseong Sunbo*, the government issued newspaper, which emphasised the importance of "education for the nation" and introduced the public education system and industrial education of the West as examples that the Koreans should emulate.[488]

It is within this context of a developing consciousness toward western values and modern ideals that the arrival of Protestant missionaries and the relative success of their educational institutions must be placed. The approval for Westerners to enter Korea for the express purpose of fulfilling a role as teachers was the social, political and cultural context into which American missionaries arrived. The relative ease with which the missionary schools were able to obtain students was the result of changes in Korean society which had started to awaken to the prospective advantages of Western styled modern education for the prosperity of the individual as well as the nation. Therefore, to simply disregard the various dynamics at work in the context in which modern education developed in Korea[489] not only overly generalises its history but leads to a perpetual appropriation of partial facts that, in turn, distort the depiction and interpretation of the historical experience.

By simply repeating the partial histories of predecessors rather than engaging in authentic historical research, the Korean Protestant historian fails to identify key factors that contributed to the Protestant relationship with modern education in Korea. For instance, the Korean Protestant historians fail to adequately appreciate the impact that the changes in the Korean religious context had on promoting changes to mission policy, or the way in which changes in mission policy influenced the way in which education was carried out.[490] Additionally, by simply focusing on the internal development of the educational institutions established by the missionaries the

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[488] Committee for Korean Historical Studies ed., *Hangugsa* 45, pp.2-3.

[489] Kim, Gi-sik and Ryu, Bang-ran, *Hangug Geunde Gyoyug-ui Taedong* (The Beginnings of Modern Education in Korea) (Seoul: Gyoyug Gwahagsa, 1999), p.25.

[490] To utilise an example from the mission experiences of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the majority of missionaries from this agency sought to transfer their work from education to direct evangelism as early as the mid 1890s. This was a combination of two factors. One was the intense desire of the Presbyterian missionaries to save lost souls. This was due to their strong attachment to a premillennial theology. However, the second factor was the positive responses that they had from the Korean people without having to use education as a medium. In other words, the rapid increase in the number of Korean converts convinced the missionaries that they no longer needed to rely on mission schools as a way of attracting Koreans to Protestantism. Therefore, they felt it was a far better use of their time and energy to simply engage in direct evangelism. This change in the attitude and perspective of the missionaries led to many of the schools either being closed or substantially curtailed in terms of manpower and resources. See, Elizabeth Underwood, *Challenged Identities*, pp. 76-87.

Korean Protestant historian fails to properly analyse, describe, and interpret these developments in relation to the wider context. This leads to a depiction of historical events that does not sufficiently consider the various external factors which actually contributed to and determined the internal developments within the institution itself.

For example, in 1894 the government funded school responsible for training translators closed down due to a variety of factors. In order to fill this void the Korean government entered into a contract, in 1895, with the *Beje Hagdang* to train selected prospective candidates for government office, English language training being conducted at *Beje*. By entering into this contract *Beje* was able to reach a point of unprecedented prosperity and prominence among the educational establishments of Korea. Many individuals who were trained at *Beje*, through this government contract, went on to be prominent and influential leaders within the independence movement of Korea as well as becoming leaders in future student movements. A prominent example of a particular individual who was a product of this government endorsed educational consignment is Synghman Rhee, who played an important role in the independence movement and became the first President of the Republic of Korea.[491] Unfortunately, none of the Korean Protestant historians include the crucial historical connection that this arrangement between the government and *Beje* had in Korea's modernisation project or the development of modern education within their historical narratives of *Beje*, modern education or Synghman Rhee.

On another note, the Korean Protestant historians tend to portray the success of the missionary institutions as being the result of two reasons: (1) the fact that the work was conducted by Christians who sought to provide a benevolent service to the Korean people and thus were blessed with providential, as well as popular, support and (2) that the work was overseen by missionaries who were more competent in management and were better equipped to provide a modern Western-styled education to the Korean people.

To a certain extent, the second of the two reasons cited above can be regarded as being valid. As individuals who had been educated within such a modern Western-styled educational system the missionaries would have known more about its structures and how best to organise and manage the institutions. Also, as the method

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[491] For more information see Kim, Gi-sik and Ryu, Bang-ran, *Hangug Geunde Gyoyug-ui Taedong*, pp.52-4.

of education and its contents were primarily those from the West, the missionaries would have been more competent in the subjects being taught when compared to Koreans who had not received the benefits of a modern Western-styled education.

However, there is also an important factor, wholly overlooked by the Korean Protestant historians, which contributed to the success of missionary educational institutions: money. The educational institutions that were established by the missionaries were supported and operated by funds provided by the Missions that operated them. Although it is true that they employed a policy of receiving payment or operating a works-for-money programme[492] the mission schools continued to be heavily subsidised by the Missions. The schools were situated in Western-styled buildings paid for by contributions from overseas and this allowed their facilities to be better equipped than their indigenous counterparts. Although much is made of the fact that many of the local churches supported primary schools that were attached to them, all of the secondary and tertiary educational institutions were managed and funded by the Missions. Furthermore, as the educational system was restructured following the Japanese annexation of Korea as a colony in 1910, the indigenous schools operated by the churches were gradually replaced by government operated public schools. As the Japanese strengthened their control of Korea and structured the educational system to support their colonial enterprise the church affiliated schools were either forced to conform to government regulations or become non-registered schools. This meant that their graduates could not continue into the government run secondary or tertiary institutions. Under the Japanese colonial educational policy only those who were educated in government accredited institutions were given opportunities to gain meaningful employment. Eventually, those schools operated by the Missions were relegated to second-class institutions.

In this respect, the influx of colonial capital from Japan became a source of competition with missionary resources. The fact that the colonial government possessed the financial resources to regulate and even substitute missionary educational institutions, combined with the political wherewithal to exercise that power to their advantage, meant that modern education from 1910, and even to a certain extent from 1905, became a colonial enterprise with the Japanese exercising the prerogative to dictate the terms and conditions under which it was conducted.

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[492] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, pp.129-31.

This would also mean that the mission schools that continued under the colonial government's educational policies inevitably cooperated in attaining the colonialists' goal of providing education to subjugate Korea to Japanese colonial policies. In this respect, although the Korean Protestant historians may wish to highlight the fact that the missionaries persevered against the Japanese colonial government and preserved their right to conduct religious education and practices in their schools, this came at the cost of acceding to the educational policies of the government and accepting much of their curricula. Therefore, the argument that the mission schools were the vanguards of modern education and the conservators of national pride and identity can only be sustained during a specific and limited period of Protestant Christian history in Korea, primarily only up to 1910. When we further consider the manner in which the educational policies of Japan toward its colony, Korea, drastically changed in order to accommodate the policies of integration and assimilation, it is difficult to regard the continued maintenance and operation of mission schools, which had no choice but to accede to these changes in educational policy, as bearing the interests of Korean enlightenment or pursuing the national interests of the Korean people. The maintenance of the mission schools throughout the colonial period would seem to reflect more the policy decisions of the various Missions to continue their educational enterprise as a means of promoting their missionary activities and indirectly supporting their proselytising efforts.

## 2. Establishing the Nation - Protestant Christianity, the Korean National Consciousness and the Growth of Nationalism

The histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by the Korean Protestant historians all contend that the national consciousness and spirit of nationalism developed in Korea primarily as a result of the positive influences of Protestantism. The introduction of Protestant Christianity, the various modernising influences of missionary enterprise and the changes wrought upon the Korean worldview by Protestant values are all presented as having been instrumental in this development.

For Paik, Protestantism was the "progressive, wholesome, and energetic spirit of life" that Korea so desperately needed in order to raise itself up from its destitution,

moral corruption and institutional bankruptcy.[493] According to Paik, it was the Protestant missionaries and their Christian movement which, "brought to the Koreans new ideals and new standards of life."[494] Summing up the influence of Protestant Christianity in the development of national consciousness he writes: "in a land of despair and humiliation there was life and hope in the Christian community."[495]

In a similar vein, Min argues that during the difficult period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the sovereignty of Korea was being assaulted from all sides, "the Protestant Church began to perform the role of providing a basis for national cohesiveness and its expression."[496] In an interesting interpretation of the Nevius Method adopted by the Korea Mission of the Northern Presbyterians, he states that the core of this mission method was in its emphasis on reaching the lower stratum of Korean society. Through this method the missionaries were able to educate the traditionally excluded groups of Korean society, those in the lower castes and the women. According to Min, the influx of Protestantism empowered the lower strata of Korean society by imparting a consciousness of individuality. This led to the development of a creative humanity that was able to participate, pro-actively, in the affairs of the nation as citizens, in the modern sense of the term. In this way Protestantism enabled the upward movement of individuals and formulated the middle class citizen which eventually led to the transformation of Korean society into a modern civil society.[497] Therefore, in Min's perspective "the Korean Protestant Church moulded the Korean 'people' into a 'nation.'"[498]

The emphasis on the Protestant contribution to the development of Korean national consciousness can also be found in the history of the Institute which claims that "from the beginning of its introduction Protestant Christianity was propagated among the Korean people within a context that was conditioned toward the development of a national consciousness."[499] In the Institute's view the development of national consciousness among the Koreans who became Protestant Christians was

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[493] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.13.

[494] *Ibid.*, p.420.

[495] *Ibid.*, p.353.

[496] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa*, p.223.

[497] *Ibid.*, pp.200-1.

[498] *Ibid.*, p.222.

[499] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.289.

primarily due to the benefits of Western styled modern education. Modern education, according to the Institute "put into practice the ideals of equality among men and women as well as introducing a new appreciation of manual labour."[500] It also "equipped the recipients of the new form of education with a modern contemplative faculty which enabled them to reflect upon their relation with the nation and country under the influence of judgments based on reason."[501] The Institute also considers the various Christian newspapers that were printed by the Protestants as another channel that contributed to the building of Korean national consciousness.[502]

The importance of Protestant literature in promoting the Korean national consciousness is also referred to by Park. According to Park, "the loyalty and patriotism that was instilled in the readership of the Christian newspapers contributed to the Protestant Church becoming deeply involved in the fate and pain of the nation."[503] Kim's history also describes the national consciousness of the Korean Protestants as arising from this context of deep national crises in the face of increasing aggression from external forces. He states that "many sought solace and repose in the Christian gospel." In this period of national crises "the early Korean converts shared the sorrows and pains of the nation's fate." He further states that the Korean Protestants "sought to express their loyalty to the Monarch through the composition of songs and prayers."[504]

In analysing the relationship between Protestant Christianity and the development of a Korean national consciousness it is important to note that the Korean Protestant historians limit this causal relationship to within the Korean Protestant constituency. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as reflecting the degree of difficulty in evaluating the influence of Protestant Christianity upon the remainder of the Korean population who did not ascribe to the tenets of Protestantism. On the other, this seemingly humble admission can also be interpreted as laying the foundation for ascribing future actions by Korean Protestants as being patriotic in nature because they were undertaken by Koreans who happened to be Protestants. In other words,

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[500] *Ibid.*

[501] *Ibid.*

[502] *Ibid.*, p.290.

[503] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 1, pp.792-3; *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 2, pp.124-7.

[504] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.120.

this provides a historical basis for evaluating all actions by Protestants as being patriotic and nationalistic in nature and purpose.

It had been noted earlier that the histories by Korean Protestant historians share a commonality in emphasising the affinity of Korean Protestant Christianity with nationalism. The narratives presented by the Korean Protestant historians with regard to Korean Protestant Christianity's involvement in the historical experiences of the Korean people are constantly portrayed as inevitably being patriotic and nationalistic in nature.

For example, reference is made in all five of the histories to what has come to be known as the Conspiracy Case of 1911. As Paik concludes his historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea at the year 1910 he naturally does not elaborate upon the topic. However, it is interesting to note that in spite of his historical study not incorporating a direct description of the event he, nevertheless, presents an interpretation of it. He attributes the cause of the Conspiracy Case as stemming from the strong association of Protestant Christianity with Korean nationalism. He claims that when the Japanese finally established sole rule over Korea as their colony this strong disposition of Protestant Christians to nationalism was a source of suspicion. As a result the Japanese colonial government became wary and sought to contain the Protestant influence in Korea which would, in the thinking of the Japanese, curtail the further rise of nationalism among the Koreans.[505] The interpretation of the context surrounding the Conspiracy Case describes a situation in which the nationalistic orientation of Protestant Christianity was such that the Japanese colonial government came to regard it as a threat to their governance. In this way Paik equates Protestant Christianity with Korean nationalism. This then naturally leads to an interpretation which portrays Protestant Christians as being, by default, patriots, nationalists and loyalists to the national cause in all their motives and actions.

The Korean Protestant historians' description of the underlying causes for why the Japanese fabricated this event further intensifies the interpretive bias in favour of Protestantism. In words quite similar to that of Paik, Min states that this event was the natural result of "Japanese efforts to eradicate the Protestant Church and uproot the Christian faith that had established itself in the consciousness of the Korean

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[505] L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.353.

people."[506] The Institute claims that this event was "the greatest persecution of the Korean Church by the Japanese" and further explains that the goal of the Japanese colonial government was to "suppress and eventually eliminate Protestant Christianity" from Korea.[507] Park evaluates the Conspiracy Case as being the result of "Japanese concern that Korean Protestant Christianity, which had grown substantially in numbers during the Great Revival Movement of 1907, had the potential of becoming an anti-government organization which could threaten the colonial enterprise of Japan."[508] Kim declares that the Japanese "regarded Protestant Christianity with hostility from the beginning." This was due, according to Kim, to their perception that the "Koreans were turning to Protestantism out of their hostility toward the Japanese." Therefore, as early as 1907 the Japanese came to regard "the Protestant Church as the epicentre of anti-Japanese agitation."[509]

Overall, the Korean Protestant historians perceive the Conspiracy Case as having been the result of Japanese fear of Korean Protestant Christianity's numerical strength. Additionally, the historians regard the cause of this fear and concern as stemming from the Japanese awareness of the affinity that Korean Protestant Christianity had with Korean nationalism. This allows the Korean Protestant historians to depict the Conspiracy Case as a challenge to the nationalistic character of Korean Protestant Christianity while also interpreting it as an attempt to break the close relationship of Protestant Christianity with Korean nationalism. In other words, the manner in which the Korean Protestant historians present the Conspiracy Case allows them to project the historically formulated identity of a nationalistic Korean Protestant Christianity as suffering on behalf of the nation. At the same time, they are able to present the collision of national interests between the Japanese and Koreans as essentially possessing a religious dimension. The persecution of Protestantism is interpreted as a challenge to nationalism, while the challenge to nationalism is, simultaneously, depicted as a persecution of Protestantism.

However, in critically analysing the relationship between Protestant Christianity and the development of a Korean national consciousness, several questions arise that

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[506] Min, Gyeong-bae, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa.*, pp.302-3.

[507] IKCHS ed., *Hangug Gidoggyo-ui Yeogsa* 1, p.308.

[508] Park, Yong-gyu, *Hangug Gidoggyowhesa* 2, p.139.

[509] Kim, Young-jae, *Hangug Gyowhesa*, p.167.

need to be addressed in order for this purported affinity to be sustainable. The first surrounds that of how the Korean nation is conceptualized by the Korean Protestant historian in his history. None of the historians address this issue of defining the Korean nation. The Korean Protestant historians simply presuppose that an indelible entity that can, unequivocally, be regarded and referred to as "the Korean nation" exists. This attitude would seem to reflect the general attitude that has represented the Korean historians' perception of nation.

However, this attitude of presuming the natural existence of an entity that can simply be labelled a nation results in a vicious circle of logic where "the normative consciousness of what a nation should be supersedes the empirical consciousness of what it actually was. This normative consciousness then functions to ordain the mythicised perception of the nation, which in turn legitimates the normative consciousness."[510] This criticism from a Korean scholar of modern Korean history aside, much of the recent research regarding nation and nationalism has consistently shown that what we refer to as "the nation" is far from a simplified entity existing a-historically or trans-contextually.

As Benedict Anderson has poignantly argued, the ideas of "nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse."[511] The difficulty of definition is compounded by the fact that

> nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy.[512]

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[510] Im, Ji-hyeon, *Minjogjuineun Banyeogida* (Nationalism is Treason) (Seoul: Sonamu, 1999), p.5.

[511] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1991 revised and extended edition), p.3.

[512] *Ibid.*, p.4.

In a similar vein, Adrian Hastings pointedly states that "in reality every nation is a unique socio-historical construct."[513] As such, "nations grow . . . bit by bit, so that at a given point of time one often cannot simply say 'this is a nation' or 'this is not.'"[514] Therefore,

> one cannot say that for a nation to exist it is necessary that everyone within it should want it to exist or have full consciousness that it does exist; only that many people beyond government circles or a small ruling class should consistently believe in it. A nation exists when a range of its representatives hold it to exist. . . . The more people of a variety of class and occupation share in such consciousness, the more it exists . . . [515]

In this respect, without clearly delineating how the concept of nation is formulated and applied to the narratives regarding the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, the Korean Protestant historian runs the risk of positing an entity which may not be suitable as the subject or object of history.

A more recent study, which has been concerned specifically with the East Asian context in which Korea belongs, has also highlighted the complexities that must be contended with in our conceptualizing the Korean nation. Criticizing the way that historical studies of the nation and nationalism have been conducted thus far, Andre Schmidt argues that these have simply been satisfied to "draw stark divisions between external imperialist powers and indigenous forces of liberation, with the clash between the two offering the main narrative for national history and an important criterion for definitions of modernity."[516] He goes on to evaluate these portrayals of nationalist history as having had "the felicitous consequence of highlighting resistance against the abuses of power, yet in so doing they have tended

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[513] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood – Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.25.

[514] *Ibid.*, pp.25-6.

[515] *Ibid.*, p.26.

[516] Andre Schmidt, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p.4.

to obscure an equally important story, the interplay between those internal and external forces that themselves constituted the nation."[517]

The dissatisfaction with the way nation and nationalism have been utilized in the study of Korea's history can also be found in studies by Korean historians. Recent studies have questioned the way in which the Korean nation has been conceptualized in historical discourses to promote a particular interpretation as normative. Go, Mi-suk claims that the experiences of colonial domination and exploitation by Japan have so skewed the historical consciousness of the Korean people that the whole of Korean society has come to adopt a simplified identification of anti-Japanese = national virtue = the supreme good. In other words, the Korean psyche has developed an obsession whereby anything and everything that is portrayed as having been or being anti-Japanese is automatically equated as having been loyal, patriotic, and beneficial to the welfare of the Korean people.[518]

This questioning of the relational aspect of nationalism with the historical experiences of colonial domination and exploitation can also be found in the studies by Im, Ji-hyeon. He argues that

> the history of modern and contemporary Korea has been deeply influenced by the historical experiences of a failed modernity. As a result "nation" has become the criterion of moral and historical judgment, in spite of the fact that in our contemporary and modern history the nation has had no realistic power. Yet, despite this lack of realistic authority the nation has remained the strongest reality in the minds of the Korean people. Within the distorted historical context of colonialism, where the state did not exist to symbolize the cooperative identity of the Korean people, the nation took upon itself the role as the mythical reality which filled the void of non-statehood.[519]

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[517] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[518] Go, Mi-suk, *Hangug-ui Geundaeseong, Geu Giwon-eur Chajaseo – Minjok, Sexuality, Byeongrihak* (In Search of the Origins of Korea's Modernity – Nation, Sexuality, Hygiene) (Seoul: Chegsesang, 2001), p.23.

[519] Im, Ji-hyeon, *Minjogjuinein Banyogida*, p.6.

Im claims that the mythological discourse surrounding the nation has severely distorted the ideological contours of the Korean peninsula. As such, he argues that "the method of perceiving the nation should be transformed from viewing it as an immutable ideology to that of regarding it as a fluid 'movement' which is forever renewing and reshaping itself."[520] He believes that "our concept of the nation must move from an ethnic-centred definition to one that is public or citizen-centred. In other words, we must move from an 'ethnic nationalism' to a 'civic nationalism'."[521]

The above clearly shows that the concepts of nation utilised in any historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea need to be clearly delineated and defined. It further shows that the Korean Protestant historian must possess an awareness of the manner in which the self-knowledge and consciousness of the nation have evolved and changed according to the historical experiences which shape and inform this self-knowledge and consciousness.

Thus far, the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians have displayed a propensity to adopt the attitude that a Korean nation existed as a fixed concept throughout the history of the Korean people. This helps them present a much more plausible interpretation of Protestant Christian relations with the Korean people that serves to highlight the positive merits and contributions of Protestantism. However, in habitually repeating not only the normative construction and definition of the self-knowledge and consciousness of a Korean

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[520] *Ibid.*, p.7. Im's methodology can be evaluated as being primarily based on Hegelianism and a Marxist interpretation of history. This explains why, in further defining his concept of the fluidity of nation he states, "nationalism represents the interests of a particular social class while simultaneously functioning as an ideology which transcends classes. In this respect, nationalism has a dialectic character. This dialectic character reflects the dialectic relationship between the historicity and continuity which unifies the basic structure of the nation. In other words, although the social and ideological contents of nationalism change in accordance with the dynamic relationship between the overall social relation within the national community and different classes, so long as the basic desire to continuously confirm their self-identity as a group through the medium of language and culture exists within the national community, then nationalism simply continues to function as a skin embracing the cuticle which holds together the nation as a class transcendent community. . . . Therefore, the attempt to simply classify nationalist movements into the category of conservative or progressive is an act far removed from the historical reality. The Janus-like characteristic of conservatism and progressiveness, that nationalism possesses, will each manifest itself in accordance with the changes that occur in the overall relationships of society as they reflect the relative balance between the primitivism and historicism that is inherently a part of the structure comprising the nation. This is why I advocate a method of inquiry into the nation and nationalism that regards it as a socio-political movement which continuously readjusts itself in accordance with the changes in the overall relationship of a given society." For further details and elaboration on the subject see Chapter 1, *'Undong'euroseo-ui Minjogjui* (Nationalism as a 'Movement') in *Ibid.*, pp.21-51.

[521] *Ibid.*, p.8.

nation but also in describing and interpreting the Protestant Christian interaction and relation with it, the Korean Protestant historian simply contents himself with presenting a recycled history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This recycled history, while efficacious in bolstering the particular identity of Korean Protestant Christianity that the Korean Protestant historian wishes to convey, inevitably falls far short of adequately describing and interpreting the significance it has as a religion for the Korean people. It also fails to properly describe how and why Protestantism could have functioned as one of the dynamic influences in the shaping of a self-knowledge and consciousness of Korean nation-ness. Simply depicting Protestant Christianity as being nationalistic in character is not sufficient.

Continuing to replicate this over simplified identification between Protestant Christianity and Korean nationalist sentiments without adequate historical research, to prove or disprove such a claim, is tantamount to falsely representing oneself in order to appease one's historical consciousness. In order for the Korean Protestant historians to claim that Protestant Christianity, in itself and in its entirety, can be identified with Korean national consciousness and nationalist sentiments, as at present the histories claim, they must present an authentic historical research which can adequately prove that Protestant Christianity was not only a necessary condition in the development of Korean national consciousness and nationalist sentiment but also a sufficient one. Should the Korean Protestant historians fail to sufficiently prove that Protestant Christianity was, historically, the necessary and sufficient condition under which Korean national consciousness and nationalist sentiment were formulated, then the contents of their histories would have to be revised so that they adequately reflect the fact that Protestant Christianity was but one of a variety of factors involved.

Another issue which arises in relation to Protestant Christianity and Korean nationalism has to do with the issue of how to interpret the motives of an individual's actions. Again taking the Conspiracy Case as an example we find that different perspectives result in different narratives and interpretations regarding this single event. As we saw earlier, the Korean Protestant historian claims that this was an attempt by the Japanese to crush the influence of Protestant Christianity. However, general histories of Korea describe this event as being part of the Japanese efforts to extend and strengthen their control over Korea. As part of this attempt the Japanese

colonial government sought to destroy any clandestine organizations operating within their jurisdiction.

After the official annexation of Korea occurred in 1910 the Japanese established a specific policy for governing Korea. This policy is known as the Autocratic Military Governance Policy (*Gunbu Mudan Tongchi*). The purpose for instigating this policy was to "eradicate the persistent resistance efforts made by Koreans in various locales throughout the country and to secure the basic foundations for the political and economic rule of Korea as a colony."[522] The extent to which the Japanese sought to establish an autocratic military government on the Korean peninsula is evidenced by the fact that the individuals who would become Governors-General were "appointed from the ranks of Japanese generals and admirals on active duty, and all legislative, executive, and judicial powers resided in his hands alone."[523]

In order to achieve their goals of governance, which were, "the maintenance of law and order" the Japanese implemented a policy of "unmitigated repression" along two main axes.[524] The first was a ruthless suppression of the Righteous Armies and any armed resistance movements within the Korean peninsula. The Japanese were largely successful in this endeavour and managed to either destroy the armed groups or drive them out across the border into Manchuria.[525] The second axis concentrated on exposing and disbanding secretive societies. It was in the process of executing this second axis of their ruthless governance policy that the Japanese discovered the

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[522] Committee for Korean Historical Studies ed., *Hangugsa* (History of Korea) 47: *Ilje-ui Mudan Tongchi-wa 3.1 Undong* (The Autocratic Military Rule of the Japanese and the March First Independence Movement) (Seoul: Committee for Korean Historical Studies, 2001), p.126.

[523] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, p.314.

[524] *Ibid.*

[525] A detailed overview of the Korean armed resistance movement and the Japanese response is presented in Yu, Choon-ki, *Hangug Minjokundong-gwa Jonggyo Hwaldong* (The Korean Nationalist Movement and Religious Activism) (Seoul: Gukhak Publishing Co., 2001), pp.30-43. The militant factions which were chased out of the Korean peninsula reorganized themselves into various groups which later came together to form the *Daehan Gwangbokgun* (Korea Independence Army). The *Gwangbokgun* operated in Manchuria against the Japanese and factions from its ranks also collaborated with the Chinese in their campaign against the Japanese during the Second World War. Other factions trained with the Americans in the United States. During the latter period of the Second World War the *Gwangbokgun* sought inclusion into the Allied forces but were denied on the grounds that Korea was not a legitimate, independent state. This refusal of the Allies stemmed from their unwillingness to recognise the Provisional Government of Korea as a legitimate government in exile. Eventually, this led to the Korean peninsula being dealt with as a spoil of war and treated in the same manner in which the Allies treated the other colonies of the Axis states.

existence of the *Sinminhoe*[526] and sought to remove it as a viable threat. By fabricating a story which claimed that members of the society had been involved in an attempt to assassinate the Governor General, the Japanese began to arrest those associated with the society and subject them to extreme torture. The final result is that a large number of individuals who could have potentially led the nationalist movement were imprisoned and their networks severely disrupted.[527]

One of the characteristics of the secret societies that were organized during the early period of Japanese colonial rule was that they tended to gravitate around particular regions. Also, each regional society utilized different approaches and methods of resistance. For example, the resistance groups in the Southern regions of Korea were primarily formed by the *yangban* and those who had formerly been involved in the Righteous Army movement. These secret societies tended to resort more readily to armed aggression in the form of assassinations or guerrilla activities. The secret societies that were formed in the North-western regions of Korea, on the other hand, were primarily comprised of young Christians and enlightened *intelligentsia*. These societies sought to strengthen the general skills and education of the people. The *Sinminhoe* had its largest support base in the North-western areas and drew many of its principle ideas from Protestant Christianity and the teachings of *Cheondogyo*.[528]

Research regarding the formation, activities, and eventual disbandment of the *Sinminhoe* by Korean historians consistently shows that the so-called Conspiracy Case was a deliberate act of oppression by the Japanese who were interested in a much larger objective than a simple thrashing of Protestantism. True, many who

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[526] The founding of the *Sinminhoe* (New People's Association) is accredited to An, Chang-ho. An is said to have organized this society in 1907 after his return from the United States. A recent study has highlighted that An was indebted to Liang Qichao of China for his ideological foundations in forming the *Sinminhoe*. Liang had advocated that a total destruction of all conservative and traditional forms of society was inevitable if China were to adequately modernise herself. Research into the writings of An, Chang-ho reveal that he was deeply influenced by this mode of thought and sought to apply it to the Korean context. The fact that An adopted Liang's *Yinbingshi wenji* as a textbook for the *Daedong* School he founded would seem to attest to this affinity. The degree to which An sought to convey the teachings of Liang to the Koreans also tells us that he thought Liang's idea of social transformation by social deconstruction could be applied to the Korean context. In general, then, the *Sinminhoe*, as its name would imply, was organized in order to promote the ideology of "a new people" among the Koreans and encourage them to put this ideology into practice in building a new society and a new people.

[527] *Ibid.*, p.135.

[528] Hwang, Seon-hi, *Hangug Geundesa-ui Jejomyeong* (A New Inquiry into Korea's Modern History) (Seoul: Gukhak Publishing Co., 2003), p.77.

were arrested and the great majority of those who were eventually charged with a crime and sentenced were Protestants. However, in considering this fact we must note that the support base of the *Sinminhoe* was located in the North-western regions of Korea, a locale which had consistently possessed the highest concentration of Protestants throughout the entire history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Additionally, we must also remember that the *Sinminhoe* was not affiliated with any particular religion, and the principle of its operations also received input from *Cheondogyo*. As such, it is difficult to simply claim that the *Sinminhoe* was a Protestant organization. Similarly, it is difficult to ascertain the motives that individuals had for joining the *Sinminhoe* actually stemmed from their religious convictions as Protestants. Rather, as the historical studies of the *Sinminhoe* reveal, the ideological basis for the society's activities appear to have been derived mainly from modernist ideals and the influences of various sociological ideas that were being introduced to Korea during this time, Social Darwinism being one such prominent thought. Additionally, the fact that the majority of the society's members were affiliated with religious organizations would seem to indicate that they were utilising these for furthering their goals rather than the society being a place where religious convictions were practiced.[529]

As for the historical studies of the Conspiracy Case that have been undertaken thus far, none can provide any concrete evidence of a direct correlation between individual participation and religious affiliation or convictions. In this respect, simply claiming that the Conspiracy Case was an attack on Protestantism because the majority of individuals who were convicted, charged, and imprisoned were from the same religious group could actually be interpreted as an example of the Korean Protestant historian arbitrarily depicting the incident as such rather than reflecting the historical reality of the event. Although many missionary sources refer to the Conspiracy Case as an attack on the Protestant establishment, their evaluation must

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[529] Some Korean historians have suggested that because of the nature of the repressive government policies many of the secretive societies sought to extend and manage their networks through the various religious organizations which were, to a certain extent, allowed to congregate without arousing undue suspicion or overly oppressive surveillance. The *Sinminhoe* is seen as the first such society to have been organised by Koreans pursuing the enlightenment and militarist approaches to national independence. Another prominent example is the *Joseon Guggweon Hwebogdan* (The Organization for Restoring Joseon's National Rights) which appointed individuals to recruit members from the *Cheondogyo*, Protestants, and Buddhists. For more details on how the secretive societies utilized religious networks and organizations for their activities see Committee for Korean Historical Studies ed., *Hangugsa* 47, p.134-6; 145-61.

be counter-weighed with an awareness of the reasons behind such depictions and a more thorough reading of their reports. The negative reports filed by the missionaries concerning the Conspiracy Case deal primarily with the fabricated manner in which the Japanese colonial government handled the arrests and trial of the individuals concerned. The missionaries also pointed to the brutal interrogation methods of the Japanese police as being inhumane and below the standards expected of a modernised state. In addition, the reports of the missionaries record their displeasure in that a great majority of prominent leaders within the Korean Protestant Church were arrested by the Japanese, thereby threatening their activities. As such, while the negative reports of the missionaries can, on the one hand, be interpreted as reflecting their concern for the Korean Protestants, they can also be interpreted as reflecting the degree of concern they had for the future of their missionary enterprise in Korea within the context of difficult Japanese colonial policies.

A more appropriate depiction and interpretation would seem to be one which presents the series of events, culminating in what has come to be known as the Conspiracy Case, as actually being a Japanese colonial government operation to crush a particular secret society, the *Sinminhoe*, which was "the strongest Korean nationalist organization at that time"[530] and in which a Protestant presence was particularly strong. Any attempt to associate the society with the Protestant establishment on a much more intimate level would require a more thorough historical research into the possible motivations that individual Protestants might have had for joining the society. Considering that ascertaining the motivations of individuals for choosing to conduct themselves in a particular manner at any given time is difficult, at best, it seems appropriate to issue a note of caution against the Korean Protestant historian to refrain from an attempt at aggrandising one's religious group at the expense of established historical facts and the absence of credible evidence.

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[530] Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, p.314.

## 3. Emancipation and Protestant Christianity – Japanese Colonial Aggression and Protestant Christian Resistance

The examples of a historical association between the fate of the Korean nation and the development of Protestant Christianity argued for by the Korean Protestant historians can be regarded as representing a mis-interpretation of historical relations between the two. However, an even more unfortunate characteristic features in the histories of Korean Protestant historians. This characteristic is an open portrayal of anti-Japanese sentiment by the Korean historians. This issue is closely related with the above perceptions of Korean Protestant Christian identity as contributing to the Korean modernisation process and the development of a Korean nationalist identity.

The dominant attitude of the Korean Protestant historian is to identify the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea with those of the Korean people. As such, they attempt to describe and interpret the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea primarily from a nationalistic perspective. At the same time, the Korean Protestant historian also attempts to present a religious interpretation of the historical experiences of the Korean people. The emphasis on depicting the influences of Protestant Christianity in Korea primarily in terms of institutional influences and contributions to the modernisation process, is an example of the former. The attempts to highlight the Protestant affiliation of key individuals who were influential in the various nationalist and independence movements during the Japanese colonial period are examples of the latter.

Unbeknownst to the Korean Protestant historian, such a dualistic depiction and interpretation of historical events and experiences poses a conflict of composites. On the one hand, the attempt by the Korean Protestant historian to describe and interpret all, or at least a majority of what are regarded as important, events experienced by Korean Protestants from a nationalist perspective causes the historian to claim that the Korean Protestant historical experience was motivated purely by nationalist objectives or inherently possessed a nationalist agenda. This presents a historical narrative which focuses on the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in so far as they intersect with those of national interests. This narrative is, then, only capable of describing events within the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea that have nationalist significance. In turn, this leads to an interpretation of all Korean Protestant Christian historical experiences as being

nationalist in nature and origin. Consequently, this becomes the primary reason why the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea become habitual repetitions of identical events, regardless of purported historiographical differences. The danger of such a narrative is that it leads the Korean Protestant historian to surmise that the Protestant Christian historical experiences inherently possess nationalist attributes. It also leads the Korean Protestant historian to claim that the merits of Protestant Christianity in Korea can and should be evaluated solely according to nationalist criteria. Inevitably, this leads to a historical narrative that has a strong ethno-centric character and justifies itself as a narrative of a "Korean" Protestant Christianity.

It is inevitable that the transmission of the Christian gospel into the culture and society of a particular people group will entail a certain degree of enculturation and indigenization in the interpretation of religious expressions. This can be understood in terms of what Andrew F. Walls has termed the "Translation Principle in Christian history."[531] However, it is questionable whether a nationalistic interpretation can be applied, unequivocally, to all, or even a large majority, of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Furthermore, this ethno-centric depiction and interpretation of Protestant Christianity in Korea raises the question of how such experiences relate with the catholicity of Christianity as a universal religion. In presenting a narrative of historical experience from a narrowly defined nationalist perspective, the Korean Protestant historian is in danger of distorting what are universal characteristics pertinent to the very nature of Christianity as a world religion. They further come across the complication that such an ethno-centric depiction, interpretation and understanding of Protestant Christianity in Korea results in the construction of a particular identity that can be dangerously exclusive. One case in point would be the manner in which the Korean Protestant historians deliberately depict the Japanese as the non-saveable villains of evil, the ultimate outsiders of Christian grace. This historical understanding of the relation between Korean Protestant Christianity and the Japanese, as a people, jeopardises any

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[531] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History – Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), pp.26-42. Walls argues that "Christian faith is about translation" and this translation "involves the attempt to express the meaning of the source from the resources of, and within the working system of, the receptor language." Additionally, Christian faith is also "about conversion" which implies "the use of existing structures, the "turning" of those structures to new directions, the application of new material and standards to a system of thought and conduct already in place and functioning." A "transformation, the turning of the already existing to new account." *Ibid.*, p.28.

possibility of reconciliation, which lies at the heart of the Christian gospel. It minimises the sincerity and authenticity of any actions taken by the Japanese Christians to apologise and seek forgiveness from the Korean Protestant Christians for unfortunate historical experiences between the two.[532] As such, the historically formulated identity of Korean Protestant Christianity as the long-suffering victims of Japanese colonial oppression severs any possibility of true Christian fellowship between Koreans and Japanese, Christians and non-Christians. At the same time, this attitude closes off any possibility of objectively studying and assessing the Japanese contacts and contributions within the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea because of its negative hermeneutical framework used to interpret anything and everything connected to Japan. In addition, this attitude of summarily demonising the Japanese removes the important task of historically assessing the degree and level of collusion that Korean Protestant Christianity accorded to the Japanese colonial enterprise.

By simply portraying themselves as the victims of historical circumstance the Korean Protestant historian absolves the Korean Protestant Christian establishment of any historical responsibility. This attitude of the Korean Protestant historians deprives Korean Protestant Christianity of grace toward their brethren in faith who erred. It also serves to construct a continued victim mentality within Korean Protestant Christianity. By perpetuating a narrative that emphasises Japanese wrongdoing against the Korean people, and especially against Korean Protestant Christians, the Korean Protestant historian adroitly sidesteps the moral and historical responsibility of confronting the actions of Protestant Christianity in Korea during the colonial period. In effect, the habitual repetition of this type of history by the Korean Protestant historian obstructs a historical study of past events that allow for a clearing of emotional obstacles holding Korean Protestant Christianity prisoner of its historical experiences, both with itself and with the historical other in the form of Japanese Christians and the Japanese people as a whole. This not only distorts the historical reality of experience but also compounds the issue of how the Korean Protestant Christian identity is re-formulated after 1945 when the demonic other is

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[532] The Japanese Christians have, thus far, issued copious statements in which they admit their complicity in the colonial atrocities of the Japanese government, confess their failure to be a prophetic voice, and seek the forgiveness of the Korean Christians and people for their past mistakes. Despite this, the Korean Protestant Christians continue to hold an unforgiving attitude toward the atrocities of the Japanese and complacency of the Japanese Christians.

no longer present in the realities of the historical experience of Korean Protestant Christianity.

Additionally, the attempt to portray the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea as predominantly nationalistic faces the danger of primarily focusing on the non-religious attributes of Protestant Christianity in Korea in order to highlight the supposed correlation. As such, the historian tends to focus mainly on the philanthropic activities, such as education and medicine, of Protestant Christianity or its institutional structures. This causes the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians to become primarily a presentation of institutional development. It also serves to present the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a continued series of institutional progress and success.

Unfortunately, even this presentation of institutional progress associated with the endeavours of the various Protestant missions and, subsequently, with the Korean Protestant Christians as they are presently contained in the histories by Korean Protestant historians, is heavily biased. This biased narrative further constitutes a historical basis for measuring the so-called success of Protestant Christianity in Korea simply by referring to the numerical gains of church attendants, pupils educated in schools run by the missions and churches, patients treated in mission run hospitals, and so forth. However, it is difficult to assess, with the level of evidence that is provided by the Korean Protestant historian, whether the acceptance and frequenting of Christian institutions by the Korean people can actually be identified with the acceptance of the religious values, norms or worldviews of Protestant Christianity. Even the number of attendants within the local churches is somewhat ambiguous when it comes to attempting an analysis of the religious commitment of the Korean. In fact, many of the historians, themselves, point to the influence of non-religious factors as being a primary cause for the Koreans coming into the church. And yet, despite allusions to these non-religious reasons for why the Koreans came into the church, the growth of the church is depicted as epitomizing the degree of Korean commitment to Protestant Christianity and success in its proselytising activities.

For example, the Korean Protestant historians emphasise the correlation between numerical growth in the churches with historical moments of crisis in the historical experience of the Korean people. However, the Korean Protestant historian then

goes on to interpret this correlation as depicting the extent to which Protestant Christianity functioned as the sole source of energy and hope for national interests and the future of the Korean people. In other words, the numerical gains obtained through moments of crisis in national life are interpreted as proving the contributory and beneficial nature of Protestant Christianity to the Korea nation. This manner of interpreting the Protestant advance, despite national regress in terms of political sovereignty, serves to strengthen the Protestant self-perception of itself as a national religion bearing upon itself the future welfare and salvation of the Korean people. Sustaining the integrity of the nation and buttressing the interests of the Korean people are described as the cross which Korean Protestant Christianity must bear as the national religion. Unfortunately, this method of depicting and interpreting the historical experiences of the Korean people as inherently related to Protestant Christianity becomes difficult to sustain when the historical experiences of Protestantism and the Korean people decidedly go their separate ways.

After the Kabo Reforms of 1894, Korea effectively shed its reliance on a particular religion to provide the foundational basis for its social, ethical and political structures. As part of its modernising process Korea consciously discarded its past practice of fixing upon a religion based ideology on which to organise its socio-political structures and sought to embrace modern, Western forms of society. Although, for the most part, the social and political structures of the West were portrayed as intricately related with Christianity, especially in its Protestant forms, the individuals who pursued the modernisation project of Korea did not universally perceive Protestantism in the same manner as their forebears had recognized Confucianism. For the intellectuals driving the modernisation project of Korea, Protestant Christianity was one of many new ideas and philosophies that were asserting their influence in Korea during the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries. With the annexation of Korea by Japan the secularization of Korean society became more rapid and various social and political ideals began to flood the intellectual landscape of Korea. Most of these were introduced by returning Koreans who had gone to Japan during the early 1880s as part of the government study programme. At the same time, new religious movements began to increase their influence upon the Korean people, while the so-called traditional religions, i.e. Buddhism and Confucianism, also actively reorganised themselves and promoted their profile among the Korean people. Therefore, at no time during the late 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ centuries was Protestant Christianity the only, or even the most influential, force in

Korean society. Nor has there been a time thereafter when any single religion functioned as an exclusive "national religion." In this respect, the colonial experience of the Korean people was one in which numerous religions, political ideologies, and social theories contributed to the emancipation of the Korean mind, body, and soul. Therefore, it would be pretentious for the Protestant Korean historian to assume that Protestant Christianity was the sole guardian of national identity, integrity, or interests.

**Conclusion**

The Korean Protestant historians continually replicate a subconscious desire to promote their particular view of the Korean nation in historically formulating the Korean Protestant Christian identity as embodying nationalist historical and political legitimacy in its historical experience. This reflects a general phenomenon of "the nationalist discourses surrounding the construction of Korean identity and culture."[533] By uncritically appropriating the nationalist perspective and method of historical study, the Korean Protestant historians continually produce a 'traditionalised' historical narrative that is "automatically subsumed under the rubric of racial history (*minjoksa*), leaving little room for alternative voices to be heard."[534] The fact that this is further constricted by the rubric of a partisan religious history increases the restrictions on alternative interpretations of the historical experiences that have been part of the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

The attempt to combine a racial and ethno-centred narrative of the Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea under the rubric of nationalism thoroughly permeates the perspective and methodology of historical study conducted by the Korean Protestant historian as well as their practice of writing history. The uncritical and unabashed inclination toward an ethno-centric depiction and interpretation of the Protestant Christian historical experience is replicated in all five histories by the

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[533] Pai, Hyung-il and Timothy R. Tangherlini ed., *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity* (Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Korea Research Monograph 26, 1999), p.1.

[534] *Ibid.*, p.4.

Korean Protestant historians, regardless of their purportedly new and different formulations of a historiography for studying the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This inclination also heavily influences the writing of history itself to the extent that the historical narratives of all five historians inevitably culminate in the repetition of a 'traditionalised' historical narrative that functions as a dominant normative narrative, which contributes to the already existing, historically formulated identity of Korean Protestant Christianity as a "national religion."

The habitual repetition and the consequent replications of this 'traditionalised' historical narrative reflect an intense desire by the Korean Protestant historian to present the legitimacy of Protestant Christianity as a religion of the Korean people through an appeal to the ethnic sentiment of Korean nationalism. This appeal to nationalism subsumes all religious experiences of Protestant Christianity, either universal or indigenous, within the hermeneutical framework of a narrow ethno-centric concept of the Korean nation. This, in turn, presents a historical narrative of Protestant Christianity that focuses on the perception of its identity as having been formed through opposition to outside influences, most notably the "ignorance" of traditional society, the "persecution" of the political and religious rivals, and the attempts at "oppression" and "extinction" by the Japanese colonial government. However, such narratives of the ever resilient nature of Protestant Christianity in Korea against the opposition and challenges of the other face the difficulty of describing and interpreting such historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea within a context where an opposing other is no longer present. This may help explain why the Korean Protestant historians predominantly focus their historical studies on the pre-1945 era where a definite and concrete other is present against which the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity can be depicted in all its pomp and glory. It may further explain why contemporary Protestant Christianity in Korea finds it so difficult to re-establish its identity as a "Korean" Protestant Christianity in the midst of diversity and ever increasing freedom of expression and experience.

That the predominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea is infused with elements of the national myth-making projects that characterise the traditional historical study of Korea clearly shows that the Korean Protestant historian is, inevitably, a product of his context. That they fail to adequately take stock of this context, which informs and influences the formation of

their historiography, is an issue of concern, especially as it foments a limited and particular identity of Korean Protestant Christianity. That the Korean Protestant historians further fail to appropriately analyse the diverse forms of internal and external forces and dynamics involved in the formation of a Protestant Christianity in Korea, past and present, further contributes to the need for a systematic confrontation with the dominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative that is considered normative in the histories by Korean Protestant historians.

# Chapter 7 – In Search of Alternatives: The Postmodern and Postcolonial Perspectives and Methodologies as Alternative Historiographies for the Historical Study of Protestant Christianity in Korea

## Introduction

The preceding study of Korean Protestant Christian historiography has shown the extent to which a specific 'traditionalised' historical narrative has functioned as a domineering mono-narrative within the histories by Korean Protestant historians. In many respects, this 'traditionalised' historical narrative can be regarded as a particular paradigm that has exerted an unchallenged influence on the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea conducted by Korean Protestant historians.

This paradigm, as "an accepted model or pattern" of studying the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, has constantly been uncritically accepted by consecutive Korean Protestant historians as a legitimate decision of how a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is to be conducted.[535] As a result, the purported developments in perspectives and methods that have been presented in the Korean Protestant historiography have merely sought to articulate and defend the limited assumptions that legitimated the Korean Protestant Christian community's identity. This led to the histories of Protestant Christianity written by the Korean Protestant historians becoming habitual replications of a standardised historical narrative that was itself a historically formulated construct.

However, the historical narratives of Protestant Christianity in Korea do not necessarily need to be limited to such a standardised and 'traditionalised' depiction and interpretation of its historical experiences. The history of Protestant Christianity in Korea can yield quite a different description and interpretation of the historical experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This, in turn, can lead to quite a different history emerging as a result of research activity engaging the various historical records that have been left to posterity.

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[535] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1970 Second Enlarged Edition), p.23.

In order for the Korean Protestant historian's study of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea to be authentic, it needs to experience a significant change in the paradigm that is utilised. The Korean Protestant historian needs to engage a process in which the time-honoured assumptions of Protestant Christianity in Korea are rejected in order to facilitate alternative perspectives and methodologies that can supplant the existing 'traditionalised' historical narrative.

In this chapter we will attempt to present two specific perspectives and methodologies that can assist the Korean Protestant historian in affecting a paradigm shift in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The two theories of postmodernism and postcolonialism can contribute to the deconstruction of the dominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative as well as providing a theoretical basis upon which to establish alternative perspectives and methodologies for describing and interpreting the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

One of the criticisms that was directed at the Korean Protestant historian at the outset of this critical and comparative study of Korean Protestant historiography was the failure to position their studies within their own particular historical context. Additionally, their lack of awareness regarding the various theoretical influences that informed their particular perspectives and methodologies was also an issue of critique.

In order for us not to repeat their mistakes in presenting an alternative approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea we will attempt to place our theoretical investigations in perspective. This will be done by placing our arguments for the postmodern and postcolonial perspective and methodology of historical studies within the genealogy of theoretical developments that have led to their formation and application in the general field of social science. The general format of this chapter for both theoretical positions will be one in which we present a brief overview of the general context in which each developed. This will be followed by specific examples of how they can help the Korean Protestant historian deconstruct the present domineering 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea, thereby allowing for the formation of an alternative paradigm of historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

## 1. The Postmodern Approach to Historical Studies

One of the difficult situations that one finds oneself when referring to "postmodernism" is in arriving at an all-encompassing and encapsulating definition. The term has a long genealogy within Western intellectual history and its ideas have been recognised as having influenced such areas as philosophy, art, critical theory, literature, architecture, design and the interpretation of history and culture. The permeating effects of postmodernism has led some to state that the world we presently live in is one of "postmodernity," a "socio-economic and political condition" with which we must come to terms as best we can.[536]

With regard to its specific interaction with the academic practice of history postmodernism is credited with fostering a "deconstructive consciousness" that has challenged the traditional paradigm of history "in terms of its epistemology, treatment of evidence, the construction of explanations, or the precise nature of our explanatory narrative form."[537]

An often quoted definition of postmodernism as "incredulity towards metanarratives" has been utilised to discredit History, as a grand narrative containing the forward march of human progress.[538] According to the postmodern critique, History as "a way of looking at the past in terms which assigned to contingent events and situations an objective significance by identifying their place and function within a general schema of historical development usually construed as appropriately progressive" inevitably resulted in modern historical studies becoming "a priori impositions on the past rather than being based on … objective facts."[539]

When we look at the process by which the Western practice of historical studies developed we see that the earliest interest in producing histories can be traced to the medieval and early modern times in which "many historians saw their function as chronicling the working-out of God's purposes in the world."[540] In this sense,

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[536] Keith Jenkins ed., *The Postmodern History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002 Reprint), pp.3-4.

[537] Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.16.

[538] Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.xxiv.

[539] Keith Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader*, pp.5, 7.

[540] Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997), p.15.

history "was quite unabashedly 'exemplar history', educational in purpose, a preparation for life."[541] However, this view was challenged with the advent of humanism and the "rationalist historians of the Enlightenment substituted for this a mode of historical explanation which rested on human forces."[542]

During the Romantic period, "the purpose of history was seen not in providing examples for some abstract philosophical doctrine or principle, but simply in finding out about the past as something to cherish and preserve."[543] It was during this period that the Rankean thesis of "Wie es eigentlich gewesen" became definitive of historical studies. Marwick evaluates this Rankean approach as being

> hermeneutic in its insistence on the supreme importance of primary sources ... and ... historicist in the insistence that the past is different from the present, that there are processes of change linking past with present, and that ... what goes before determines what comes after.[544]

Such notions were based on a belief "that there is a past reality or truth, waiting to be discovered and described" by the historian.[545] This view held that "the historian just has to clear away the darkness and confusion" hiding the truth and reality of the past.[546] The existence of a historical reality was considered to be obtainable through the application of an objective, scientific method.

In order for history to be scientific, it "needed something like a laboratory and something like physical evidence."[547] For the historians, "the seminar rooms and archives where university scholars taught and did research became the laboratories of history" and the historians "sought their evidence amid the dust of actual documents

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[541] Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History; Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p.53.

[542] Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History*, p.15.

[543] *Ibid.*, p.16.

[544] Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, p.66.

[545] Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why? – Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.12.

[546] *Ibid.*

[547] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, p. 73.

and other traces left by the past."[548] The histories which resulted from such scientific methods "employed the distant voice of the omniscient narrator" who "stood above superstition and prejudice to survey calmly and dispassionately the sciences of the past and tell a truth that would be acceptable to any other researcher who had seen the same evidence and applied the same rules."[549] Historians, subsequently, took "science as their model both in terms of research and writing."[550]

However, this conception of history as a science was not with its critiques. One of the earliest was Dilthey. He argued for the recognition of "a fundamental distinction between scientific knowledge and cultural knowledge, and that, as part of the latter, history had no need to attempt to conform to the norms of science."[551] Taking up Dilthey's argument in a more elaborate manner Marwick states several further points that support this differentiation between history and science. In the first instance, "there is a fundamental difference in the subject of study: the natural sciences are concerned with the phenomena of the natural world and the physical universe, while history is concerned with human beings and human societies in the past."[552] Not only is the subject matter different, but there is a significant difference in terms of methodology. "Historians do not carry out controlled experiments of the sort typically conducted in a science laboratory."[553] The purpose and aims of study are different as well. "While historians may very properly develop theories and theses, they are not concerned with developing laws and theories in the way scientists are."[554] Furthermore, "while scientific laws and theory have powers of prediction, history … does not have such powers."[555] Finally, the manner in which the results of study are expressed are quite different. "The contributions to knowledge produced by historians come in the form of extended pieces of prose

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[548] *Ibid.*

[549] *Ibid.*

[550] *Ibid.*

[551] Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, p.81.

[552] *Ibid.*, p.248.

[553] *Ibid.*

[554] *Ibid.*

[555] *Ibid.*

(articles or books), while major scientific discoveries are often best reported in very terse articles, sometimes in a page or two of mathematical equations."[556]

A primary concern that led to the attempt to place history within the realms of science was the concern over objectivity in historical studies. In order to preserve the modernist conception of history as a study of the truth of the past existing independently of the historian, it was imperative that the method of study be proven as trustworthy and objective. However, contemporary developments in social history have challenged the ideas of objectivity that had sustained the modern conception of historical study. The social historians, "by offering a more complex picture of the past" have been able to reveal "how limited the previous histories were."[557] Their contributions have helped in underlining "the fact that history writing has always been intensely ideological."[558] Their contributions eventually led to the development of the argument that "history could never be objective."[559]

One of the benefits of recognising the ideological aspect of historical studies is that "it encourages an awareness of historical contingency."[560] In other words, it provides an awareness of how "history could have been different."[561] It allows us to understand that "much of what has happened in the past ... has been interpreted quite arbitrarily."[562] Such an understanding empowers us by helping us realise that "the direction of history, both as past narratives and as future events, can actually be changed."[563] Therefore, "what we are calling our history, is something that is imposed upon a far more complex reality than we could ever otherwise deal with, and ... by accepting one history (or version of history), we are inevitably excluding many others."[564]

However, even these arguments for an alternative perception of history, in the lower case, became suspect with the advent of the postmodern condition referred to

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[556] *Ibid.*

[557] *Ibid.*, p.200.

[558] *Ibid.*

[559] *Ibid.*

[560] Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why?*, p.54.

[561] *Ibid.*

[562] *Ibid.*

[563] *Ibid.*

[564] *Ibid.*, p.64.

above. The most problematic of the arguments that academicians were presenting in defence of their history that sought to debunk History was how they failed to properly address the "naturalist fallacy" which is "the attempt to pass off the study of history in the form of the ostensibly disinterested scholarship of academics studying the past objectively and "for its own sake" as "proper" history."[565] The postmodern theory challenges the conception of both History and history concerning

> the doxa which states that the "proper" study of the past is a study "for its own sake"; that the only legitimate study of the past is one which disinterestedly and objectively understands it "on its own terms," and that "proper" historians should always attempt to get to "the truth of the past."[566]

As a consequence, postmodernism has led to the perception of both upper and lower case histories "being "metahistorical" constructions" that are, "like all constructions, ultimately arbitrary ways of carving up what comes to constitute their field. Both … histories are actually just theories about the past and how it should be appropriated."[567]

As a result of such developments it has become commonplace, now, to recognise that there is no single entity which can simply be referred to as "history," per se. Rather, as Keith Jenkins and others point out, "'history' is really 'histories.'" In light of such observations it is important for us to constantly bear in mind that "history" is not "a simple and rather obvious thing" but there exist "a multiplicity of types of history whose only common feature is that their ostensible object of enquiry is 'the past.'"[568] This recognition is important as it presents the historian with "the recognition of one's own limitations and of the equal validity of contributions from others who may be quite different from oneself."[569] More than anything else, it

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[565] Keith Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader*, p.4.

[566] Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why?*, p.2.

[567] Keith Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader*, p.8.

[568] Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006 Reprint), p.4.

[569] Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why?*, p. 9.

reveals that the traditional methods of historical study are "extremely problematical and demonstrably ideological."[570]

The postmodern approach to historical studies provides us with a significantly useful tool by which we can challenge and de-construct the existing 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea and its pervasive, domineering influence as a meta-narrative. At the same time, it also provides us with the necessary theoretical basis for re-constructing the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This is because a postmodern approach to historical studies "enables historians to be increasingly reflexive as to what they think history is, and to explicitly position themselves within and/or against traditional discourse."[571]

Perhaps one of the strongest criticisms that can be brought against the existing historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea is the degree to which they abuse "historical facts at the most basic level ... in the name of ideology" while simultaneously being "complacent and simply relying on 'standard' works" in their narratives.[572] Such practices result in the historians, despite their purportedly different methodologies and perspectives, producing histories that replicate a "consensus opinion" and generalisations about a "period or religion [i.e. Protestant Christianity] of a given period."[573]

The postmodern approach allows us to challenge such generalised consensus histories. They allow for a more open approach to history in which the study of Protestant Christianity, as a religion, is "open to those traditionally overlooked, from the working classes to the 'heretics.'"[574] It further encourages us to engage the historical experiences of "the supposedly obscure on their own terms" as well as "the problems and issues they faced and their roles in constructing identities."[575]

Postmodernism further allows the "human consciousness to be re-conceptualized in anti-essentialist and less reified terms, suggesting that all knowledge is socially

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[570] Keith Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader*, p. 2.

[571] Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why?*, p.2.

[572] James G. Crossley, "Defining History" in James G. Crossley and Christian Karner ed., *Writing History, Constructing Religion* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), p. 19.

[573] *Ibid.*, p.19.

[574] *Ibid.*, p.25.

[575] *Ibid.*

constructed, heterogeneous, significantly shaped by existing structures of power, and thus also open to contestation."[576] As such, it provides "space and visibility for localized, disempowered and idiosyncratic religious understandings and experiences" to enter into the historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

## 2. The Postcolonial Approach to Historical Studies

Another recent theoretical development that has influenced the study of history in the West is the emergence of postcolonialism. The rise of colonialism was "first and foremost part of the commercial venture of the Western nations that developed from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries."[577] The historical practice of seizing "foreign lands for government and settlement was in part motivated by the desire to create and control markets abroad for Western goods, as well as securing the natural resources and labour-power of different lands and peoples at the lowest possible cost."[578] For the rapidly industrialising Western nation-states "colonialism was a lucrative commercial operation, bringing wealth and riches to Western nations through the economic exploitation of others."[579] In this respect, "colonialism and capitalism share a mutually supportive relationship with each other."[580] However, mention should also be made of how the practice of colonialism was not the sole prerogative of Europe or North America. As the historical experience of Korea and other Asian countries clearly demonstrates, the practice of seeking colonial domination over other people groups and lands was also effectively employed by Japan.

Taking the above into consideration, it is important for us to differentiate between "colonialism" and "imperialism." In the broadest sense, "imperialism is an

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[576] Christian Karner, "Postmodernism and the Study of Religions" in James G. Crossley and Christian Karner ed., *Writing History, Constructing Religion*, p.33.

[577] John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.7.

[578] *Ibid.*

[579] *Ibid.*

[580] *Ibid.*

ideological concept which upholds the legitimacy of the economic and military control of one nation by another."[581] In contrast, "colonialism … is only one form of practice which results from the ideology of imperialism, and specifically concerns the settlement of one group of people in a new location."[582] Accordingly, "colonialism is one historically specific experience of how imperialism can work through the act of settlement, but it is not the only way of pursuing imperialist ideals."[583]

In nearly all instances of colonialism it is "perpetuated in part by justifying to those in the colonising nation the idea that it is right and proper to rule over other peoples."[584] This perception of a moral authority or divinely inspired duty of colonisation is further defended "by getting colonised people to accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things – a process we can call 'colonising the mind.'"[585] This process perpetuates "the values and assumptions of the colonisers as regards the ways they perceive and represent the world" and make the colonised "succumb to a particular way of seeing" themselves and the world.[586]

Within the colonial discourse, language "is more than simply a means of communication; it constitutes our world-view by cutting up and ordering reality into meaningful units."[587] Contrary to generalised perceptions, language "does not just passively reflect reality; it also goes a long way toward creating a person's understanding of their world, and it houses the values by which we … live our lives."[588] Language is used by the coloniser to subvert the "ways of regarding the world" so that they "reflect and support colonialist values."[589] In this sense, colonialism functions as a prevailing worldview that affects both the coloniser and the colonised.

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[581] *Ibid.*

[582] *Ibid.*

[583] *Ibid.*, p.8.

[584] *Ibid.*, p.18.

[585] *Ibid.*

[586] *Ibid.*

[587] *Ibid.*, p.19.

[588] *Ibid.*

[589] *Ibid.*

Therefore, for those who suffered under the yoke of colonial oppression and exploitation, "freedom from colonialism comes not just from signing declarations of independence and the lowering and raising of flags. There must also be a change in the minds, a challenge to the dominant ways of seeing."[590] Accordingly, "the term 'postcolonialism' is not the same as 'after colonialism' as if colonial values are no longer to be reckoned with."[591] We need to be aware of the observation that postcolonialism "does not define a radically new historical era, nor does it herald a brave new world where all the ills of the colonial past have been cured."[592] On the contrary, "it acknowledges that the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today."[593] As such, we need to formulate a perception of postcolonialism that views it as "a *process of postcolonialising*."[594] We need to learn how to "disentangle the term 'postcolonial' from its implicit dimension of chronological supersession, that aspect of its prefix which suggests that the colonial stage has been surpassed and left behind." In its stead we must highlight a "notion of the term as a process of coming-into-being and of struggle *against* colonialism and its after-effects."[595]

It is important for us to develop an understanding of postcolonialism that regards it "not merely as a chronological marker but as an epistemological one."[596] This is because "the process of postcolonialising" entails "the critical process by which to relate modern-day phenomena to their explicit, implicit or even potential relations to this fraught heritage" of colonialism.[597] In this respect, postcolonialism seeks to challenge the "inextricable relationship of epistemological dependency between the [coloniser] and its formerly colonised Others that makes itself felt at the most subtle points in the [coloniser's] perception of itself."[598] Therefore,

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[590] *Ibid.*, p.22.

[591] *Ibid.*, p.33.

[592] *Ibid.*

[593] *Ibid.*

[594] Ato Quayson, *Postcolonialism – Theory, Practice or Process?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p.9. Italics in original.

[595] *Ibid.* Italics in original.

[596] *Ibid.*, p.11.

[597] *Ibid.*

[598] *Ibid.*

> postcolonialism has to be seen as a viable way not just of interpreting events and phenomena that pertain directly to the 'postcolonial' parts of the world, but more extensively, as a means by which to understand a world thoroughly shaped at various interconnecting levels by what ... we might describe as 'the inheritance of the colonial aftermath'.[599]

Following this line of reasoning, it is possible to formulate a working definition of postcolonialism in such a way that "it involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire."[600] In many ways, postcolonialism is "as much about conditions under imperialism and colonialism proper as about conditions coming after the historical end of colonialism."[601]

One of the methodologies that contributed to the development of poscolonialism as a means of critiquing and analysing the various influences of colonialism on the minds and intellect of the colonised was the development of theories in colonial discourse analysis. Colonial discourse analysis specifically looks at the manner in which "representations are always overdetermined by questions of power."[602] As such, it is

> deliberately wide-ranging and eclectic, crossing disciplinary boundaries with impudence to show how the issue of colonial authority is established as an ensemble manifesting itself both at the material domain as well as in the area of ideas, images, assumptions and discursive representations.[603]

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[599] *Ibid.*

[600] *Ibid.*, p.2.

[601] *Ibid.*

[602] *Ibid.*, p.60.

[603] *Ibid.*

Another aspect of colonial discourse analysis is that it "refuses the humanist assumption that literary texts exist above and beyond their historical context."[604] Therefore, "it situates texts in history by exposing how historical contexts influence the meaning within literary texts, and how literary representations, themselves, have the power to influence their historical moment."[605] In addition, "criticism of colonial discourse dares to point out the extent to which the (presumed) 'very best' of Western high culture ... is caught up in the sordid history of colonial exploitation and dispossession."[606] This attitude toward colonial discourse acts "as a means of resisting the continuation in the present of colonial representations which survive after formal colonisation has come to an end."[607] This contributes to the process of postcolonialism because it reiterates the importance of continued resistance to and further challenges the presumption that "colonialism conveniently stops when a colony formally achieves its independence ... it is crucial to realise that colonial values do not simply evaporate on the first day of independence."[608] It also helps to bring to light the fact that "colonialism's representations, reading practices and values are not so easily dislodged"[609] and that postcolonialism "in part involves the challenge to colonial ways of knowing, 'writing back' in opposition to such views."[610]

The postcolonial approach to history concerning historical agency and description continues to ask questions which appear to be no different from those raised by other historians: "What is the best attitude to adopt to contradictory sources? What counts as historical facts and how are these to be interpreted and narrativised into a recognisable coherence? How does this historical narrativisation relate to understanding about the past, and possibly, about the present?"[611] However, the postcolonial approach toward historical studies differs, importantly, in the way it develops an "attitude towards the archive from which conclusions are drawn about

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[604] John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, p.38.

[605] *Ibid.*

[606] *Ibid.*

[607] *Ibid.*

[608] *Ibid.*, p.32.

[609] *Ibid.*

[610] *Ibid.*

[611] Ato Quayson, *Postcolonialism – Theory, Practice or Process?*, p.60.

colonial history" that differ substantially from that of what can be referred to as traditional history. In essence, the difference in approach

> is not so much that postcolonial theory is not interested in the questions that traditional historians ... pose about the past, but that radically different methodologies are brought to bear on the entire business of adjudicating between sources and deriving significant conclusions from them.[612]

The postcolonial approach to historical studies is ever mindful of the fact that "various contending historiographic interpretations of the imperial and colonial past are intimately linked to structural locations in the world today."[613] As such, it is not sufficient for the historian to simply claim that "resistance was everywhere evident in the colonial encounter and to pursue the idea through tropological and discursive readings of the archive."[614] Rather, the historian is faced with the challenge of identifying whether the actual act of studying history is

> really advancing the uses to which the past can be put; whether the past is being rigorously attended to in terms both of the empirical archive and more imaginative interpretations; and whether the historiographical knowledge thus produced is really sensitive to the voices of the past in all their variegated complexity.[615]

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[612] *Ibid.*, p.59.

[613] *Ibid.*, p.75.

[614] *Ibid.*

[615] *Ibid.*

## 3. Applying the Postmodern and Postcolonial Historiography as an Alternative Paradigm to the Historical Study of Protestant Christianity in Korea

The two approaches to historical studies presented above provide us with specific tools that can be applied to the study of Protestant Christian history in Korea. They also provide us with a method of assessing the validity of our arguments concerning the habitual repetitive nature of the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea conducted by Korean Protestant historians. In attempting to apply these two paradigms to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea we can make the following arguments. In the first instance, the attempt to appropriate a postmodern and postcolonial approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea allows for recent theoretical developments to inform the development of a new perspective and methodology for describing and interpreting the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

Additionally, presenting specific examples of how a postmodern and postcolonial approach to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea can be appropriated provides a theoretical basis upon which the argument contained in this thesis can be validated. We have thus far argued that the Korean Protestant historians' failure to acknowledge the influence of historiographical developments in the wider study of history have resulted in the uncritical appropriation and repetition of a domineering 'traditionalised' historical narrative. We have further argued that the practice of habitual repetition contributes to the formation of a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity. In turn, this particular Korean Protestant Christian identity influences the historical self-understanding of the Korean Protestant historian, and this historically informed self-understanding provides a basis upon which the Korean Protestant historian formulates his/her historiographical perspective and method. As a consequence, the histories that the Korean Protestant historians write utilising this historiographical perspective and method result in the repetitive accumulation of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative which further legitimates and strengthens the particular Korean Protestant Christian identity. In this way, the cyclical relationship between historiography, history writing and identity functions to replicate identical historical narratives concerning the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. The continued repetition of the cyclical relationship in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea

further functions as a tool of legitimation that is uncritically appropriated to provide a historically based apologetical narrative glamorising the exploits of Protestant Christianity in Korea which appropriate partial facts and distort the historical context in order to preserve the integrity of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

In arguing the above we have also noted that the most influential elements which contributed to this 'traditionalised' historical narrative were those of nationalist sentimentalism and an over-exaggeration of the colonial experience. Therefore, in this section we will attempt to show how the postmodern and postcolonial approaches can be appropriated within the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea to challenge the dominant 'traditionalised' historical narrative. We will do this by attempting to apply the postmodern approach to a critique of nationalist influence in the formation and legitimation of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative, and by attempting to apply the postcolonial approach to critique Korean Protestant Christianity's experience of imperialism/colonialism. While this may not provide a conclusive representation of a postmodern or postcolonial historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea it will suffice as an example of how an alternative paradigm can contribute to challenging the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that is uncritically reproduced in the histories by Korean Protestant Christians and which replicates a consensus opinion regarding the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It will further help us to realise that the deconstruction of this dominant narrative through the appropriation of alternative historiographical paradigms can contribute to broadening the description and interpretation of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

### 1) How a Postmodern Historiography can be Used to Deconstruct the Narrative of Nation and Nationalism in the Histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant Historians

In our review of the historiographical developments in Korean historical studies we noted how the experience of colonialism and the critical role of imperial historiography within that experience led to the development and entrenchment of a

Korean nationalist historiography. We further noted how this nationalist historiography was utilised, in varying forms and degrees, during the colonial period by Korean historians to counter the arguments of imperial historiography that sought to legitimate the Japanese colonial enterprise. It was noted that the perceived urgency of producing a historical narrative that validated the integrity of the Korean nation was so pervasive within the Korean intelligentsia groups of that time that this nationalist historiography subsumed other theoretical developments that could have influenced or informed the historical study of Korea. Our studies also revealed that the tendency of the nationalist historiography to permeate and dominate the practice of studying the historical experiences of Korea received a new impetus after 1945, an epochal moment when Korea was finally liberated from the physical yoke of Japanese colonial domination. However, the subsequent division of the land and people of Korea along competing ideological lines, the establishment of separate polity and government institutions, and the subsequent trauma of internecine warfare experienced through the Korean War led to the nationalist historiography becoming a tool by which to legitimate the political and ideological interests of North and South Korea. Nationalist historiography was used by the government of both Koreas to trace their genealogy to the anti-colonial struggles of the Korean people. By firmly entrenching themselves within this historicised tradition of struggle and suffering in the interests of the "Korean nation" each side sought to justify their political existence as well as legitimate their arguments as the sole representative government of the "Korean people." In this manner, nationalist historiography continued to develop within the logical argument that set the description and interpretation of the Korean historical experience against "the Other." The anti-nationalist activities of the Japanese colonialists were now supplanted by the anti-nationalist activities of the other in the shape of the ideologically mis-oriented communist North and capitalist South. This further led to the nationalist historiography employing a logic of description and interpretation of historical events, both pre 1945 and post, in ways which sought to justify the existing political, social, and economic structures of one side over and against that of the other. As a result, nationalist historiography became embroiled in an ideological and political power game and was relegated to an ancillary of the powerful legitimising their status of power, authority, and representation.

Although the Korean Protestant historians were not directly involved in the development and application of the presently dominant nationalist historiography,

their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea were, inevitably, influenced by it. Of the five Korean Protestant historians that we have engaged through this study only one, L. George Paik, actually experienced the context of Japanese colonialism at a point in which it could have directly influenced the development of his historiographical perspective and method. However, we must note that the predominance of the nationalist historiography and its utilisation in legitimating discourses of power was the context in which all five Korean Protestant historians were educated and trained. As such, there is a distinct correlation between the nationalist tendency of general historical studies on Korea and that contained within the historical studies of Protestant Christianity conducted by Korean Protestant historians. One particular characteristic which reflects this commonality between the two is the fact that neither the Korean historian nor the Korean Protestant historian seriously questions the very concept central to the nationalist historiography, nation.

A recent study on the phenomena of nationalism in the Korean academia, as well as general discourses on Korean history, pointed to the fact that the majority of studies concerning Korea were based on a "mythical understanding of the nation." In turn, this was situated within the logic of an argument that glamorised nationalism "simply because of its perceived opposition to the savagery of imperialism." This "mythical understanding" is premised on an epistemological framework that interprets historical experiences "not as they were but as they ought to have been," in effect, constructing "a normative understanding of the nation." This normative understanding of the nation, in return, functions to ordain the mythical understanding of the nation, and this ordained mythical understanding of nation serves to legitimate the normative understanding of nation resulting in the notion of nation being snared in a cyclical logic, the fallacy of the vicious circle.[616]

One of the damaging results of this cyclical logic is that it "assumes there can be only one legitimate outcome of national becoming" and intensifies "the binary logic of true nation / anti-nation" in the historical studies of Korea.[617] This binary logic takes to the extreme the Manichean oppositions as popularised by Abdul JanMohamed. According to JanMohamed, 'Manichean aesthetics'

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[616] Lim, Ji Hyeon, *Monjogjuineun Banyeogida*, p.5.

[617] Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson, "Rethinking Colonial Korea", pp.1-2.

> refers to a system of representations which conceives of the world in terms of opposed categories, from which come a chain of association. Reality is constructed as a series of polarities which derive from the opposition posited between light and darkness, and good and evil. This provides a structure of both meaning and morality. So, in a system of Manichean aesthetics, all that is light is orderly, tractable, rational, energetic and ultimately good; whereas all that is dark is degenerate, chaotic, transgressive, lunatic, satanic and hence evil.[618]

This binary logic of nationalism devolves into a unitary focus on the historical experiences of Korea. It also describes and interprets these historical experiences with a specifically artificial unity that further fosters misplaced presumptions of a specific Korean nation-ness.

The nationalist historiography is founded upon the conviction that "turn-of-the-century nationalism was [...] a pent-up reservoir of pre-existing Koreanness ready to flow along the deep new channel provided by imported concepts of the nation-state."[619] As a result, the nationalist narrative "subsume[s] all competing forms of identities under the category of the nation" and "represses the consideration of other categories in its drive to enshrine a single, inherent identity of value."[620] This produces a conceptualisation of nation which "becomes a whole in relation to the colonial Other and thus overrides alternative collective identities such as class, gender, region, and status."[621] It further promotes a historical narrative that views "all social movements under colonial rule" as, inherently, "nationalist and anti-colonial."[622]

The critical and comparative analysis of the five histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians that we have presented in the

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[618] John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, pp.155-6.

[619] Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson, "Rethinking Colonial Korea", p.5.

[620] *Ibid.*, p.14.

[621] *Ibid.*

[622] *Ibid.*

above chapters clearly reveals the affinity that their historical narratives have to this uncritical application of the nationalist historiography. The presentation of Protestant Christianity as a positive and contributory social movement that led the modernisation, westernisation, and enlightenment process of Korea further contributes to justifying the application of a nationalist perspective in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea. However, in uncritically replicating this nationalist historiography in their historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea the Korean Protestant historians fail to recognise that a simplified application of "the evaluative categories of nationalism" [623] is unhelpful in attempting an authentic historical study of Protestant Christian historical experiences. This is because the necessarily narrow categories of nationalism "hinder the historian from investigating large and important areas of experience that fall outside the interests"[624] of nationalists, Protestant and non-Protestant.

How then can a postmodern historiography challenge the domineering influence of this nationalist historiography in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians? The first step would be in naming the nationalist historiography for what it is, an all pervading dominant meta-narrative in analysing, describing, interpreting, and presenting the historical experiences of the Korean people. By challenging the nationalist historiographical paradigm and methodology which continuously controls and limits the way in which historical studies of Korea, including Protestant Christianity, are conducted, the postmodern critique raises the question of whether this dominant historiography can effectively remain the sole historiographical perspective and methodology with which to study the historical experiences of the Korean people.

The challenge of a postmodern historiography can be mounted by employing a hermeneutic of suspicion with regard to the nationalist orientation of the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians. Questioning the fundamental bases upon which the very concept of nation is grounded the postmodern historiography requires the Korean Protestant historian to re-address the manner in which the nationalist historiography is employed in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In challenging the dominant position of the

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[623] Kenneth M. Wells, "The Price of Legitimacy: Women and the Kŭnuhoe Movement, 1927-1931" in Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson ed., *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, p.191.

[624] *Ibid.*

nationalist paradigm for studying the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea, postmodern historiography functions to create space within which the Korean Protestant historian can explore the ways that an alternative paradigm can be applied in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

A second contribution of postmodern historiography can be found in the way that postmodernism critiques the perception of history as a general schema of progress. One of the secondary influences that the nationalist historiography imparts upon the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is that it becomes entwined with the teleological orientation of what many perceive is the Christian perspective of history, the idea of progress. However, David Bebbington argues that contrary to the generalised perception, the idea of progress in history as it developed in the western tradition of historical studies, particularly during the Enlightenment of the 18th century, "was a secularisation of the Christian view of history" and as such, "betrays its Christian origins." This idea of progress in human history which originated from the 18th century is based on a linear understanding of history. It was a paradigm of historical study which sought to present "confidence in the future" while attributing "the pattern of progress [...] to the past." Therefore, according to the idea of progress man "has advanced not just in matters like technology and the improvement of material conditions. There has been progress also in the use of man's intellect and ... his moral capacity."[625]

Within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by the Korean Protestant historians this secularised version of the idea of progress is coupled with the ideological inclination of nationalist historiography that seeks to promote Korean initiative of progress and development as a means of contradicting the logic of the imperial historiography. This leads the Korean Protestant historians to appropriate the language of the divine in constructing tropes that construct and articulate the Protestant Christian historical experience in Korea as a combination of divine intervention and direction toward Christian, as well as nationalist, goals. Such tropes allow the Korean Protestant historians to forego any constructive criticism of the influences that the dominant nationalist historiography has in their investigations, descriptions, interpretations, and presentations of the Korean Protestant Christian

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[625] David Bebbington, *Patterns in History – A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), p.68.

historical experience. It further serves to strengthen the historically constructed identity of Korean Protestant Christianity as a religion which fulfilled all the religious aspirations of the Korean people as well as saved the integrity of the nation against the evil and demonic encroachment of Japanese imperialism. This results in a historical narrative which cloaks the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea with that of the Korean nation. This overlapping of the historical experience serves to promote the Korean Protestant Christian perception of its historical experience as representative of the Korean nation. Preserving the historical integrity of the nation in the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea is regarded as identical to preserving the historical integrity of Korean Protestant Christianity. Therefore, within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians Korean Protestant Christianity becomes the embodiment of the essence of nation-ness without which the Korean nation itself can no longer exist as a historical entity. On the other hand, the Korean nation is depicted as the epitome of Protestant Christianity which is the divinely destined vessel in which the Christian culmination of glory will be realised. Thus, in one stroke the Korean Protestant historian not only romanticises the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea in nationalist tropes but also mysticises those of the Korean people in religious ones. In this sense, the Korean Protestant historian is uncritically appropriating the nationalist historiography in the historical study of Protestant Christianity, and in the process abusing "the idea of particular providences by treating them as a series of vindications of one's own nation."[626] In all respects, the Korean Protestant historian appears to have fallen into what Bebbington describes as "the twin traps of describing over-boldly the outworking of the divine will" in the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity that are commensurate with those of their perceptions of the Korean nation while "ignoring details that do not readily fit into the resulting scheme" of Protestant Christianity as a religion of the Korean nation, for the Korean nation.[627]

The result of the above juxtaposing of the nationalist historiography with a teleological appropriation of the Christian idea of progress by the Korean Protestant historians is that historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea become "*a*

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[626] *Ibid.*, p.172.

[627] *Ibid.*, p.183.

*priori* impositions on the past rather than being based on … facts"[628] that represent the wider historical experience and the context in which they took place. It further reproduces the 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Protestant Christianity in Korea that historically justifies the particular Korean Protestant Christian identity by replicating the description and interpretation of historical experiences in a way which legitimates the specific depiction of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. In this respect, we can utilise the postmodern historiographical perspective in critiquing the Korean Protestant historian for interpreting the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea arbitrarily, and in a way which serves only to bolster their particular perception of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

A third contribution which postmodern historiography can make in presenting an alternative paradigm for the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is by bringing to the attention of the Korean Protestant historian the important fact that the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea can be described and interpreted through "a multiplicity of types of history."[629] Recognising that there exist multiple ways in which histories of the same subject can be constructed can challenge the complacent attitude of the Korean Protestant historians and encourage them to move beyond "simply relying on 'standard' works"[630] on which to base their historical investigations, descriptions, and interpretations of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It can also further challenge the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that tends to write out the historical experiences of those who stray from the normative contents of the consensus history that is necessary in maintaining the semblance of uniformity, particularly in relation to those that relate to preserving the integrity of Protestant Christianity in Korea as a national religion so that it can conform to the objectives of the nationalist historiography. It thus provides a methodology and interpretive framework with which to challenge the hagiography that presently masquerades as history.

A further contribution of acknowledging the possibility of multiple histories concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea is that it allows the historical experiences

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[628] Keith Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader*, pp.5, 7.

[629] Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, p.4.

[630] James G. Crossley, "Defining History", p.19.

of those who have been traditionally overlooked in the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea to take their place as legitimate and meaningful entities. The 'traditionalised' historical narrative that presently dominates the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians simply focuses on the historical experiences of the two denominational groups that are considered to be the oldest and the largest, Presbyterian and Methodist. As such, the historical narratives tend to generalise the historical experiences of these two denominations as representative of Korean Protestant Christianity. However, as we have illustrated in the previous chapters, the seeming dominant status of these two denominations cannot be presented as a legitimate basis for describing and interpreting their historical experiences as though they represent the entirety of what Protestant Christianity in Korea experienced. By simply formulating their historical narratives round the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that uncritically glamorises and romanticises the historical experience of these two larger denominations and their institutions, the Korean Protestant historian misrepresents the relational aspect of Protestant Christianity in Korea with its wider socio-cultural context as one that is simply based on numerical and financial strength. Such a simplified and overly generalised narrative of Protestant Christian history in Korea overlooks the relationship that missionary power and influence had in the establishment of Protestant Christianity, as well as its impact on the relations between competing denominational interests.

As the three examples above demonstrate, postmodern historiography can clearly contribute in challenging the 'traditionalised' historical narrative that permeates the historical studies of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians because it allows for the dominant influence of the nationalist historiography, which functions as a meta-narrative for studying the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, to be challenged. The process of deconstructing the prevailing influence of the nationalist historiography by appropriating postmodern perspectives and methods is only one way of attempting to adjust the perspectives and methodologies that Korean Protestant historians can utilise in their study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. However, we must also constantly bear in mind that even the postmodern historiography can offer only a partial description and interpretation of the varied and multi-layered historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. It is possible to argue that no single historiographical perspective or methodology can adequately investigate, describe, analyse, interpret, and present the wide ranging historical

experience of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Nevertheless, the advantage of postmodern historiography is that it brings to the fore of historical inquiry regarding Protestant Christianity in Korea the basic fact that engaging in the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is a fluid and dynamic exercise with a multiplicity of avenues. Calling the Korean Protestant historians to acknowledge the diversity of historical experiences, as well as the multiplicity of ways in which these historical experiences can be studied and narrated, is a challenge that postmodern historiography seems best equipped to effect, at least at this juncture of theoretical developments on studying history.

### 2) How a Postcolonial Historiography can be Used to Critique the Narratives Concerning the Historical Experience of the Imperial/Colonial in the Histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant Historians

One of the observations that was made in considering how the nationalist historiography developed in the general field of historical studies in Korea was the way in which its pervasiveness was buttressed by the colonial experience of Korea at the hands of the Japanese. In comparatively and critically analysing the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians we noted that the historical experience of colonialism was instrumental in the appropriation of the nationalist historiography in their histories. In many respects, the thirty five years, from 1910 to 1945, of Japanese colonial domination have been utilised by Korean historians, secular as well as religious, to legitimate their historical narratives that depict the historical experiences of the Korean people as an unbroken and untainted struggle for the preservation of national integrity against the evil and demonic forces of colonialism. For their part, the Korean Protestant historians attempt to juxtapose a religious interpretation of the historical experiences during the colonial period alongside those of a nationalist orientation. This enables the Korean Protestant historian to depict the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea as central to those of the Korean people and strengthens the particular Korean Protestant Christian identity as a national religion which provides the moral and spiritual foundations for the integrity of Korean nation-ness.

However, in studying the colonial experience of the Korean people, including the Korean Protestant Christians, we must recognise that an important distinction exists between imperialism and colonialism. We had noted this differentiation between imperialism as "an ideological concept which upholds the legitimacy of the economic and military control of one nation by another" and colonialism as "only one form of practice which results from the ideology of imperialism." Unfortunately, the Korean historian, in general, and the Korean Protestant historian, in particular, fails to grasp the significance of this differentiation in their historical studies of the imperial/colonial experience of Korea.

This lack of appreciation of the wider implications that imperialism has, as a worldview and ideology, leads the Korean historians to simply regard the colonial experience as having begun with the forced annexation of Korea in 1910 and ending with the "liberation" of Korea in 1945. However, when we look at the ways in which the ideology and worldview of imperialism was active in northeast Asia, of which the Korean peninsula is a part, we see that its influences has a much longer history and a variety of tacit mechanisms by which it was expressed. For the most part of the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the immediate effects of the imperial/colonial enterprise threatened the sovereignty of Korea as an independent state the direct instigators were its immediate neighbours, Russia, China, and Japan. However, the imperial/colonial aspirations of France, Britain, and to a certain extent, the United States all impinged upon the Korean peninsula during this period. The imperial/colonial ideology and methodology employed by the former was to attempt direct control over territory and people as a means of securing their strategic and economic interests. In contrast, the imperial/colonial ideology and methodology of the latter adopted "the form of 'informal empire,' or [...] the 'imperialism of free trade."[631] The intended goal of this policy "was not to establish direct political control or formal colonies but instead to exercise less direct and visible forms of domination."[632] Therefore, this mechanism of imperial/colonial hegemony sought to advance "commercial interests under the cloak of free-trade ideology" through the conclusion of treaties, which were "usually called 'treaties of free trade and

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[631] Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword – The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1998 Paperback Edition), p.8.

[632] *Ibid.*

friendship.'"[633] These treaties, which "were 'unequal contracts' signed under duress – the explicit or implicit threat of force [...] gave [...] Western powers rights and privileges that went unreciprocated. This asymmetrical structure, later dubbed 'the unequal treaty system,' was a classic expression of 'informal empire.'"[634]

Within this climate of competing and conflicting imperial/colonial interests it was Japan which was ultimately able to coerce Korea into becoming a part of the international relationship of modern states and a globalised capitalist economy. Japan successfully copied the gunboat diplomacy that characterised the Western imperial/colonial methodology of this period in forcing upon Korea the Ganghwa Treaty in 1876. This single event was the most dramatic expression of the imperial/colonial aspirations of Japan toward the Korean peninsula and was the first successful attempt by Japan to emulate Western European powers. It also challenged the status quo of the traditional relationship between China, Korea, and Japan forever altering the "time-honoured traditional arrangement" and placing "Japanese-Korean relations on a similar footing" as that of Japan and the Western states with whom it had signed modern treaties, i.e. unequal treaty status.[635] By effectively consolidating its domination of Korea, politically, militarily, economically, and culturally, the Japanese were able to construct an unrivalled hegemony over the Korean peninsula. In this respect, Japan became the most prominent implementer of the imperial/colonial ideology and methodology. However, we must constantly bear in mind that this imperial/colonial enterprise of Japan occurred within the wider "world dominated by Western imperialism" which "provided both context and model."[636]

It was within this dual envelope of imperial/colonial ideology and methodology that Korea began its entrance into modernisation and capitalisation, two ideals that were encapsulated in an unbridled pursuit of westernisation. Andre Schmid provides a detailed analysis of how the pursuit of a westernised process of modernisation was conceptualised among the Korean intelligentsia and progressive leaders under the rubric of "*munmyeong gaehwa* – 'civilisation and enlightenment.'"[637] The majority

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[633] *Ibid.*, pp.8-9.

[634] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[635] Lew, Young-ick, "Japanese Challenge and Korean Response, 1876-1910: A Brief Historical Survey" in Korean National Commission for UNESCO ed., *Korean History: Discovery of Its Characteristics and Developments*, p.476.

[636] Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, p.11.

[637] Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, pp.32-47.

of the self-perceived progressive and enlightened intelligentsia and political leaders of Korea sought to stimulate reform and renewal by presenting the logical and legitimating arguments for adopting western modes of modern society through the promotion of this concept. However, their enthusiasm for unabashedly positing the westernised forms of social reform, in all areas of Korean society, as the ideal toward which the Korean people should aspire was "predicated on a division between the East and West, serving to reinforce Eurocentric definitions of a historically inferior East."[638] As a result, the glamorisation of the West and the romanticised prophecies of how Korea's achieving the Western mode of modernism would enable the preservation of national integrity and socio-economic development "had less to do with the social reality on the other side of the world and more to do with a writer's desire to contrast a targeted feature of his nation with that of a superior Other in order to muster a rationale for reform."[639] The sweeping generalisations that resulted from the uncritical appropriation of *munmyeong gaehwa* as a political and ideological slogan for rationalising reform unwittingly served to reproduce and solidify the Western notions of the Orient within the worldview and psyche of the Korean people. As a result, traditional Korean society was lambasted and lamented as being backward, uncivilised and immoral with the only remedy being the hurried adaptation of the advanced, civilised, and moral structures of Western society. Unfortunately, this logic played into the hands of the Japanese imperial historiography which legitimated their conquest and dominion over Korea on the basis of their re-interpreted version of Western Orientalism. In this respect, in spite of the best of intentions, the Korean intelligentsia and progressive leadership facilitated the encroachment of the imperial/colonial ideology and methodology by providing a conceptual basis upon which the establishment of imperial/colonial hegemony could be justified.

Within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians, the examples noted above take on an additional dimension of justifying the imperial/colonial hegemony in spiritual and religious terms. The Korean Protestant historians replicate the logic of the Korean intelligentsia and progressive leaders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to a startling extent in

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[638] *Ibid.*, p.36.

[639] *Ibid.*

their histories. For the Korean Protestant historians Protestant Christianity, especially the version of it that was introduced through the missionary activities of Americans, is regarded as being 'the' central dynamic which led to the successful application of Korean aspirations for *munmyeong gaehwa*. The establishment of schools and hospitals, as well as the positive influences of the American missionaries through their "civilising presence," are hailed as representing the ideal of Western modernism towards which Korea should aspire. The perception of America as a "Christian" nation, taken as a matter of fact rather than established through a critical evaluation of its social, cultural, religious, economic, and political context, further contributes to the Korean Protestant historians assuming that everything that the American missionaries did in Korea was benevolent and based on the Christian principles of self-sacrifice and compassion for Korea. Further contributing to this perception of the American missionary as an unselfishly sacrificing individual who only had the best interest of the Koreans at heart is the literal acceptance of the missionary statement that they aspired to segregate themselves from political intrigue and interests. This statement of non-partisanship with regard to politics is interpreted by the Korean Protestant historians as representing the "objectiveness" of the American missionaries. Interestingly, this perceived "objectiveness" is subjectively interpreted as though the missionaries harboured implicit sympathies and support for the political aspirations of the Koreans in preserving their sovereignty. Thus the American missionaries are referred to as the bulwark that contributed in the preservation of national integrity on the one hand, and the spiritual purity of Protestant Christianity in Korea on the other.

We have noted in chapters Three and Six that the Korean Protestant historians' depiction of the Protestant contribution to the modernisation project of Korea conveniently overlooks the dynamics of indigenous agency. We have also criticised the Korean Protestant historians for abusing the 'traditionalised' historical narrative to present Protestant Christianity as 'the' quintessential contributor to Korea's modernisation process. We described how the negative depictions of the Korean context employed by the Korean Protestant historians to maximise the contributory effects of Protestant Christianity unintentionally replicated the logic of imperial historiography, as well as the Orientalist perspective of the West.

One of the ways in which the Western nations legitimated their colonial enterprise was by formulating a theoretical framework which would justify their

enslavement and exploitation of others. This theoretical framework was primarily based on the arguments of Social Darwinism and concretised in what Edward Said has criticised as Orientalism. According to Said, Orientalism is "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in … Western experience."[640] It is, furthermore, "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and … 'the Occident'."[641] This understanding of Orientalism thus allows "a very large mass of writers" to accept "the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, … social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on."[642]

More important for our critique of the Korean Protestant historians 'traditionalised' historical narrative and its portrayal of the American missionary enterprise in Korea is Said's definition that

> Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.[643]

In a majority of cases, the missionaries regarded themselves as being the authorities with regards to Korean characteristics, cultural as well as religious. Therefore, they unabashedly presented their works on Korea as bringing to the attention of their Western compatriots "information which would supplement their understanding of the Oriental Korea."[644] The various representations of Korea that were penned by the missionaries reflected the traditional practice employed by the Westerners in their production of discourses on the Orient, representation of the

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[640] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003 Reprint with new Preface), p.1.

[641] *Ibid.*, p.2.

[642] *Ibid.*

[643] *Ibid.*, p.3.

[644] Ryu, Dae-young, *Chogi Migug Seongyosa Yeongu*, p.203.

Orient on behalf of the Occident. More than anything else, the Orientalist tendency of the missionary writings clearly displays the "configuration of power" that existed between the American missionary and the Korean Protestant Christian. It was the American missionary who determined the religiosity of the Korean, the extent to which they could be taught and trained in the Western religion, i.e. the American version of Protestant Christianity, and the degree to which they had sufficiently appropriated and accommodated it as "their" faith. Ultimately, it was the missionaries who determined the extent to which Korea was "successful" or not as a mission field.

This dominance of missionary power in determining the worth and legitimacy of Korea as a Protestant mission field, and subsequently as a sufficiently indigenised "Christian" land raises questions with regard to how Korean Protestant Christianity in Korea actually was. Thus far, within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians the 'traditionalised' historical narrative tended to argue for an early indigenisation of the Christian faith by the Koreans. However, when we apply the postcolonial perspective in conjunction with the Orientalist critique on the extent to which the missionaries held sway over Protestant Christianity in Korea we are challenged to reconsider and re-evaluate the claims for the establishment of a genuine, fully indigenised Korean Protestant Christianity. We discover instances in which the missionaries continued to exert influence over the theological education, doctrinal formation, and ecclesiastical polity of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Not only did the missionaries discourage the Koreans from questioning the contents of what the missionaries had taught but they also sought to strongly enforce their theological and doctrinal positions in the lives of Korean Protestant Christians. Any indigenous individual who challenged the authority of the missionaries or the integrity of their theological and doctrinal teachings soon found him/herself being labelled a liberal heretic who undermined the integrity and purity of the Christian gospel. Although the Korean Protestant historians present brief accounts of instances when Koreans sought to challenge the theological and doctrinal teachings of the missionaries they simply interpret these events as instances where individuals, having come under the influence of liberal theological education, were misled and, therefore, rightly condemned as heretics by the Korean Protestant establishment.

However, I would argue that this simplified depiction and interpretation of how certain individuals were ostracised for daring to present different theological interpretations and utter doctrinal statements that contrasted with those taught by the missionaries exemplifies the extent to which the Korean Protestant Christian establishment was captive to the religious hegemony of the missionaries. The position of authority and respect that the missionaries held, and which was accorded them by the Korean Protestant Christians, ultimately took on a hegemonic nature where certain religious forms prescribed by the missionaries dominated and certain ideas of what was properly Christian, as defined by the missionaries, were more influential, thereby resulting in a durable religious, cultural leadership that went unchallenged by the Korean Protestant Christians.

Although the hegemonic nature of the missionary dominance of Korean Protestant Christianity is not directly related to the colonial domination by the Japanese, I would argue that it was an indirect form of imperial/colonial domination upon Protestant Christianity in Korea. This in turn results in the dual imprisonment of Korean Protestant Christianity. On the one hand, the Korean Protestant Christian is physically imprisoned by the direct colonial domination of the physical space he/she inhabits by the Japanese. On the other, he/she is encapsulated by the tacit and indirect domination of the religious and theological restraints imposed by the domineering missionary who reserves the ultimate authority of judging, and thereby legitimating the religious authenticity of the Korean Protestant Christian.

True, this argument will need to be further developed and supplemented by a thorough historical study of Protestant Christianity which looks in detail at the relationship of the Western missionary and Korean Protestant Christianity. For example, the manner in which the missionaries refused to allow contextual matters, such as the need for attending to the rice fields during the Summer months, to influence their decisions on how the observance of the Sabbath is to be strictly enforced and observed by the Korean Christians. Such a detailed study is not possible within the limitations of this particular study. However, at this juncture we can still proffer the need for such studies to take place as well as present a postcolonial historiographical perspective as a useful alternative paradigm with which to engage in such studies.

A specific example of how a postcolonial perspective would help to construct an alternative historiography can be found in the postcolonial theories of Homi K

Bhabha. Bhabha's theory of hybridity allows the Korean Protestant historian to approach the issue of identity from a totally different perspective than that of the 'traditionalised' historical narratives. This is because Bhabha stresses the "interdependence and the mutual construction of ... subjectivities" in his analysis of "colonizer/colonized relations," which for our purposes would be that of the missionary and those under the dominant power of their influence.[645] Bhabha contends that

> The theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.[646]

The "Third Space" advocated by Bhabha provides the Korean Protestant historian with a location from which he can deconstruct the traditionalised identity of Korean Protestant Christianity as well as a location in which he can attempt its reconstruction. This is because Bhabha's "Third Space" and its concept of hybridity provides the Korean Protestant historian with the necessary tools to critically engage the ideal identity of the Korean Protestant Christian that the missionary sought to instil within the Korean Protestant Christians while giving due attention to the subjective reception of this ideal by the Korean, a reception which in turn is influenced and informed by the religious-cultural context in which the reception and internalisation process took place.

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[645] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p.118.

[646] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p.38.

Furthermore, the concepts of mimicry and ambivalence which accompany Bhabha's theory of hybridity provide the Korean Protestant historian the wherewithal to critically examine the fluctuating relationship between the missionary and the Korean Protestant Christian. This is because the notion of ambivalence refuses to view the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, i.e. the powerful and the dominated, as one of simple and complete opposition or resistance. "Rather than assuming that some colonized subjects are 'complicit' and some 'resistant', ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject."[647] In addition, when the colonized/dominated subject is encouraged or even coerced to "'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer."[648]

The above theoretical tools provide the Korean Protestant historian with a perspective of interpreting and understanding the Korean Protestant Christian identity in a way which moves beyond the binary either/or categorisation. Consequently, the efforts by individual Korean Protestant Christians to appropriate the religious doctrines and concepts conveyed by the missionaries in a way which was not commensurate with the desires of the missionaries need not necessarily be simplistically relegated to the negative category of heresy or incipient syncretism. In addition, the Korean Protestant historian is presented with a wider academic freedom to investigate the tensional relationship between the missionary and their Korean Protestant Christian counterparts by no longer needing to engage in a historical description and interpretation which necessitates the vindication or vilification of a particular formation of identity along particular doctrinal lines. Such latitudinal freedom for the Korean Protestant historian can facilitate a reformulation of Korean Protestant Christian identity which could help to break the cyclical relationship that merely legitimates and concretises the 'traditionalised' historical narrative of Korean Protestant Christianity that has, thus far, been the focus of our critical and comparative analysis.

Another contribution of a postcolonial historiographical perspective for the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is in challenging the myth

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[647] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies*, pp.12-3.

[648] *Ibid.*, p.139.

surrounding the American missionaries' contention of adhering to a policy of separation between Church and State. Contrary to the mythical perception of the Korean Protestant historians, the American missionaries did *not* oppose the encroachment of Japanese imperial/colonial power, nor did they stand alongside the Koreans in an attempt to preserve the integrity of the Korean nation in sympathy to the nationalistic desires of the Korean people. More often than not, the American missionaries were willing to play the role of a pontifical soothsayer, uttering "calming words about benign or altruistic empires"[649] whilst ignoring the evidence of the destruction and the misery and death brought by the so-called civilising mission of Japanese imperial/colonial domination. Under the pretence of adhering to a strict separation of Church and State the American missionaries counselled the Koreans to accept the domination of their land, people, culture, economies, and mentality. "Obedience to 'the powers that be' was preached from every pulpit" with the Korean Christians being told that "the church must have nothing to do with politics."[650] Missionaries went so far as to excommunicate individuals whom they "suspected of activity in political movements."[651] In fact, the missionaries actively sought to use "their great influence to induce the Koreans to acquiesce in Japanese rule."[652] As Andrew F. Walls noted, in applying this idealised principle of the separation of Church and State

> Modern American missionaries have ... displayed a curious political naiveté, as though by constantly asserting that church and state were separate they have somehow stripped mission activity of political significance. Even the elementary political implication of their presence ... has not always been recognised.[653]

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[649] *Ibid.*, p.xvi.

[650] Arthur Judson Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East – The Story of Korea's Transformation and Japan's Rise to Supremacy in the Orient* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919; Seoul: Institute of Korean Church History Studies, 1995 Reprint Edition), p.566.

[651] *Ibid.*

[652] *Ibid.*, p.574.

[653] Andrew F. Walls, "The American Dimension in the Missionary Movement" in Joel A. Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk ed., *Earthen Vessels – American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), p.16.

To a certain extent, what Walls politely describes as political naiveté appears to be explicit accommodation of the Japanese right to colonise Korea and dictate the social, political, cultural, and religious structures of society. For example, Arthur J. Brown articulates his ideas of best promoting "satisfactory relations between the missionaries and the Japanese in Korea" as encouraging the missionaries to

> cultivate friendly relations with Japanese officials who are willing to be on such terms with them; scrupulously respect and obey, and teach the Korean Christians to respect and obey, the lawfully constituted authorities; limit their activities to missionary duties and keep themselves and, as far as possible, the Korean churches wholly apart from all political matters; ... recognise the Japanese nation as the absolute legal master of Korea, which, on the whole, means well and which should be helped and not hindered in all its legitimate policies and methods; and finally, encourage such relations between the Korean and Japanese Christians as will tend to unite the two peoples in bonds of amity.[654]

The above words of counsel not only reflect the extent to which even the missionary enterprise was thoroughly encapsulated within the worldview of Orientalism that characterised the Western perspective of the Other during this period, it also repeats, nearly verbatim, the political position adopted by the American government. Such corresponding similarities clearly demonstrate that American foreign mission policy was not only a child of the imperial/colonial ideology but was also seconded into promoting and legitimating its application in the non-Western mission field, such as Korea. Therefore, although the Americans may be exempted from the critique of engaging in direct colonisation of Korea they cannot be absolved of colluding with the imperial/colonial ideology in pursuit of their own stated interests, political, economic, military, and religious.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that a postcolonial historiography can make to the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea is by presenting the Korean Protestant historian with a mandate to re-assess his/her approach to the colonial

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[654] Arthur Judson Brown, *The Master of the Far East*, p.582.

experience that forms a central part of his/her history. It also necessitates a much more detailed and broader study of the entire matrix in which the imperial/colonial ideology and worldview operated during the periods being studied by the Korean Protestant historian. As the above examples have briefly illustrated, the imperial/colonial hegemon and the variety of mechanisms through which it was established require the Korean Protestant historian to incorporate a wider investigation of the context in which Protestant Christianity developed in Korea, as well as the various power relations that influenced and informed its development. More importantly, along with postmodern historiography, postcolonial historiography presents the Korean Protestant historian with the challenge of how to reconcile seemingly opposite and contradictory historical experiences that occurred within what can now only be acknowledged as a much wider and broader Korean Protestant Christianity.

**Conclusion**

The attempt to present alternative paradigms for the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea contained in this chapter may appear inconclusive. However, the presentation of a postmodern and postcolonial historiography has allowed us to fully appreciate the extent to which the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea are diverse in both breadth and scope. It has also enabled us to identify how a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea employing an alternative paradigm can do justice to the diversity of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

The above illustrations of an alternative paradigm for examining, analysing, describing, interpreting, and narrating the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea can only function as a signpost of a general direction that needs to be taken into consideration by the Korean Protestant historian seeking to engage in an authentic historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. As such, it does not seek to be conclusive, merely reflective of the need within the historic context in which Korean Protestant Christianity finds itself today. This context is one in which its identity is being challenged, at the same time that it is being challenged to

reformulate a self-understanding of itself as Korean Protestant Christianity. A postmodern and postcolonial historiography are only but two of many possible alternative paradigms that can be employed by the Korean Protestant historian to engage in a valid historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea. They are presented here simply as examples of how the appropriation and application of alternative paradigms might contribute to a much broader, more in-depth, and authentic historical research.

# Conclusion

This thesis has presented a comparative and critical analysis of five histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea written by Korean Protestant historians with specific reference to the relation between historiography, the writing of history, and identity. It has been argued that the historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea continuously replicates a 'traditionalised' historical narrative that serve to historically legitimate a particular Korean Protestant Christian identity. The recycling of this 'traditionalised' history has occurred despite purported differences in historiographical paradigms employed by different Korean Protestant historians at various times.

The research has demonstrated that a cyclical relationship between identity, historiography and history writing exists in the practice of historical studies concerning Protestant Christianity in Korea as it is presently conducted by Korean Protestant historians. As a result, the histories by Korean Protestant historians become an un-checked, uncritical replication of the 'traditionalised' historical narrative which not only provided the historical framework for the particular Korean Protestant Christian identity but also serves to further strengthen and justify it in historical and ecclesiological terms.

In examining the theories, perspectives, and methodologies that the Korean Protestant historian employs in conducting a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea this thesis has attempted to contribute a critical assessment of present practice. It has raised the importance of the need for the Korean Protestant historian to appropriately recognise and adequately appreciate the influences of external theoretical developments in how they construct their particular historiographies. It has also raised an awareness of the fact that a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea need not, indeed should not, be limited to a nationalist representation of its historical experiences in order to qualify as a history of Korean Protestant Christianity. On the contrary, this research has demonstrated that a narrowly constricted nationalist presentation of its history is more prohibitive than productive. Another proposition from this research is that the Korean Protestant historian needs to incorporate a wider perspective with regards to historiography, adopting a rigorous attitude with an awareness of multiplicity and plurality not only

in terms of how to study a given historical event but also with regard to the diverse influences that give shape to it.

The positive contribution of this research is both academic and practical. It is academic in that it calls the Korean Protestant historians to broaden their theoretical horizons and, thereby, extend the possibility of how the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea can be studied in new, creative, and alternatively authentic ways. It is practical in that it attempts to reflect how history is used or mis-used in relation to how one's self-perception and understanding, one's identity, is shaped by, and also shapes that history. In this respect, this research is also an attempt to challenge the ways in which Korean Protestant Christianity perceives itself, and in turn sees the world and shapes its relation with it.

Nonetheless, this thesis can only be the starting point in the search for new and creative ways of studying and narrating the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. We must clearly acknowledge that this thesis does not do proper justice to the numerous issues that were identified in the course of research.

In the first instance, a historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea needs to harness a better understanding of world mission activities that took place during the 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ centuries, as well as the wider context of global Christianity in more contemporary periods. One of the reasons why the Korean Protestant historian repeatedly falls prey to simply replicating the 'traditionalised' historical narrative is because he/she consistently fails to recognise the wider influences that have influenced and helped shape the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. This leads to a truncated historical narrative which overlooks crucial historical interaction between local, regional, and global events and influences. Therefore, the Korean Protestant historian needs to reconfigure his/her perception of Protestant Christianity in Korea to incorporate the wider context and adequately reflect this awareness within the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea.

A second area that the Korean Protestant historian needs to develop is the relationship of Protestant Christianity in Korea with other religions and social ideologies that co-exist with it. The particular Korean Protestant Christian identity views Protestant Christianity as having developed irrespectively of, and independent from any external influences. Although aspects of this research challenge this historically misinformed identity, this research was not able to adequately address the relational aspect of Protestant Christianity with other religions and social

ideologies. A more detailed analysis of how religious concepts, perspectives, worldviews, and practices were exchanged between Protestant Christianity in Korea and other religions would be necessary in order to determine how those elements that are regarded as characterising a "Korean" Protestant Christianity came to be shaped. Likewise, further analysis of the interaction that Protestant Christianity in Korea had with the various social ideologies, such as Social Darwinism, Socialism, Communism, Capitalism, etc. is necessary in order to better understand how developments in its religious and social attitudes and theologies were shaped by historical experiences.

A third area for further research would be in the socio-political relationship of Protestant Christianity in Korea. Certain aspects of this were touched upon in this research when we looked at the issue of Church, State and Nation, as well as the historical experiences of colonialism. However, a much more detailed and thorough analysis of how Protestant Christianity interacted with the socio-political, as well as the cultural and economic context in which its historical experiences took place is necessary. Such research would enable the Korean Protestant historians to provide a much broader history which looks not only at the religious, moral, or spiritual relationship that Protestant Christianity had with the Korean people but also describes how the context influenced Protestant Christianity as much as, or even more than, Protestant Christianity influenced the context. This would allow for the histories of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians to move away from simply presenting a historical apologetic of Protestant activity, especially where these approach hagiography.

The wealth of historical experiences that have helped shape Protestant Christianity in Korea is a never drying well, from which more and more individuals come to draw. The historical study of Protestant Christianity in Korea by Korean Protestant historians is in need of a new vessel with which to draw this water. The single 'traditionalised' historical narrative is insufficient for satiating the needs of present Protestant Christianity in Korea. In this respect, the Korean Protestant historians face a difficult challenge of finding new, creative, and alternatively authentic perspectives and methods that can draw from the depth and breadth of the historical experiences of Protestant Christianity in Korea. At the same time, they are presented with an opportunity to discover how the appropriation of these new

historiographical paradigms can inform, influence, and help shape that which we call Korean Protestant Christianity.

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